RISE and PROGRESS

OF

RELIGION in the SOUL:

ILLUSTRATED

In a COURSE of Serious and Practical Addresses,

Suited to PERSONS of every CHARACTER

WITH

A Devout MEDITATION OF PRAYER added to each CHAPTER.

By P. DODDRIDGE, D.D.

Qua feret hic Greffund. Fontes dabit arida Vallis, Inque cavas Fossas depluet Agmen Aquæ: Instaurabit Iter Vires: & Nummis Ora Visurus Solymæ figet in Æde Podem.

Johnst. Plal. 1xxxiv. 5, 6.
Testifying—Repentance toward GOD, and Faith toward our Lord
Jesus Christ.

Acts xx. 21.

Jesus Christ.

Whom we preach, warning every Man, and teaching every Man in all Wisdom; that we may present every Man perfect in Christ Jesus.

Col. i. 28

The FOURTEENTH EDITION.

To which is added,

A SERMON on the CARE of the SOUL.

PORTSEA:

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1798.

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To the Reverens

Dr. ISAAC WATTS.

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Reverend and Dear Sir,

WITH the most affectionate Gratitude and Respect, I beg Leave to present to You a Book, which owes its Existence to your Request, its Copiousness to your Plan, and much of its Perspicuity to your Review, and to the Use I made of your Remarks on that Part of it, which your Health and Leisure would permit you to examine. I address it to You, not to beg your Patronage to it, for of that I am already well assured; and much less from any Ambition of attempting your Character, for which, if I were more equal to the Subject, I should think this a very improper Place: But chiefly from a secret Delight, which I find in the Thought of being known to those whom this may reach.

As

as one whom You have honoured, not only with your Friendship, but with so much of your Esteem and Approbation too, as must substantially appear, in your committing a Work to me, which You had yourself projected as one of the most considerable Services of your Life.

I HAVE long thought the Love of Popular Applause a Meanness, which a Philosophy far inferior to that of our Divine Master might have taught us to conquer. But to be effeemed by eminently Great and Good Men, to whom we are intimately known, appears to me, not only one of the most folid Attestations of some real Worth, but, next to the Approbation of God and our own Consciences, one of its most valuable Rewards. It will, I doubt not, be found so in that World, to which Spirits like your's are tending, and for which thro' Divine Grace You have obtained fo uncommon a Degree of Ripeness. And permit me, Sir, while I write this, to refresh myfelf with the Hope, that when that Union of Hearts, which has so long subsisted between us, shall arrive to its full Maturity and Endearment there, it will be matter of mutual Delight, to recollect, that you have affigned me, and that I have in some Degree executed a Task, which may perhaps, under

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the Blessing of God, awaken and improve Religious Sentiments in the Minds of those whom we leave behind us, and of others, who may arise after us in this vain, transitory, infnaring World.

Such is the Improvement you have made of your Capacities for Service, that I am fully persuaded, Heaven has received very few, in these latter Ages, who have done so much to serve its Interests here below; few, who have laboured in this best of Causes with equal Assiduity, and equal Success. And therefore, I cannot but join with all who wish well to the Christian Interest among us, in acknowledging the Goodness of Providence to You and to the Church of Christ, in prolonging a Life at once fo valuable and fo tender, to fuch an advanced Period. With them, Sir, I rejoice, that Gop hath given you to possess in so extraordinary a Degree, not only the Consciousness of intending great Benefit to the World, but the Satisfaction of having effected it, and of feeing fuch an Harvest already springing up, I hope as an Earnest of a much more copious Increase from thence. With Multitudes more I bless God, that you are not in this Evening of so afflicted and yet so laborious a Day, rendered entirely incapable of ferving the Publick

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Publick from the Press, and from the Pulpit: and that amidst the Pain which your active Spirit feels, when these pleasing Services suffer long Interruptions from Bodily Weakness, it may be so singularly refreshed by reslecting on that Sphere of extensive Usefulness, in which, by your Writings, You continually move.

I CONGRATULATE you, dear Sir, that while you are in a Multitude of Families and Schools of the lower Class, condescending to the humble, yet important Work of forming Infant-Minds to the first Rudiments of Religious Knowledge, and devout Impressions, by your various Catechisms and Divine Songs; You are also daily reading Lectures of Logick, and other useful Branches of Philosophy, to studious Youths: And this, not only in private Academies, but in the most publick and celebrated Seats of Learning; nor merely in Scotland, and in our American Colonies, (where from some peculiar Confiderations, it might most naturally be expected;) but thro' the amiable Candor of some excellent Men and accomplished Tutors, in our English Universities too. I congratulate you, that You are teaching no doubt, Hundreds of Minifters,

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ters, and Thousands of private Christians, by your Sermons, and other Theological Writings: fo happily calculated to diffuse through their Minds that Light of Knowledge, and through their Hearts that Fervour of Piety, which Gon has been pleased to inkindle in your own. But above all, I congratulate you, that by your Sacred Poetry, especially by your Psalms, and your Hymns, You are leading the Worship, and I trust also animating the Devotion of Myriads, in our publick Affemblies every Sabbath, and in their Families or Closets every Day. This, Sir, at least fo far as it relates to the Service of the Sanctuary, is an unparalleled Favour by which Gon hath been pleased to distinguish you, I may boldly fay it, beyond any of his Servants now upon Earth. Well may it be esteemed a glorious Equivalent, and indeed much more than an Equivalent, for all those Views of Ecclefiaftical Preferment, to which such Talents, Learning, Virtues, and Interest might have intitled you in an Establishment; and I doubt not, but You joyfully accept it as such.

Nor is it easy to conceive, in what Circumstances You could, on any Supposition, have been easier and happier, than in that Pious and truly Honourable Family, in which, as I verily believe, in special Indulgence both to You and to it, Providence

viii. DEDICATION.

dence has been pleased to appoint that you shall spend so considerable a part of your It is my earnest Prayer, that all the Remainder of it may be ferene, useful, and pleafant. And as, to my certain Knowledge, your Compositions have been the fingular Comfort of many excellent Christians (some of them numbered among my dearest Friends,) on their dying Bed; for I have heard Stanzas of them repeated from the Lips of feveral, who were doubtless in a few Hours to begin the Songs of Moses and the Lamb: So I hope and trust, that when God shall call you to that Salvation, for which your Faith and Patience have fo long been waiting, He will shed around you the choicest Beams of his Favour, and gladden your Heart with Confolations, like those which You have been the happy Instrument of administring to others.

In the mean Time, Sir, be affured that I am not a little animated in the various Labours to which Providence has called me, by reflecting, that I have fuch a Contemporary, and especially fuch a Friend; whose single Presence would be to me as that of a Cloud of Witnesses here below, to awaken my Alacrity in the Race that is set before me. And I am persuaded, that while I say this, I speak the Sentiment of many of my Brethren,

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Brethren, even of various Denominations: A Confideration, which I hope will do fomething towards reconciling a Heart fo generous as Your's, to the Delay of that exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory, which is now fo nearly approaching. Yes, my honoured Friend, You will, I hope, chearfully endure a little longer Continuance in Life amidst all its Infirmities; from an Assurance, that while Gon is pleased to maintain the Exercise of your Reason, it is hardly poffible that You should live in vain, to the World, or yourfelf. Every Day, and every Trial, is brightening your Crown, and rendering you still more meet for an In. heritance amongst the Saints in Light. Every Word that you drop from the Pulpit, has now, furely, its peculiar Weight: The Eyes of many are on their ascending Prophet, eagerly intent that they may catch, if not his Mantle, at least some Divine Sentence, from his Lips, which may long guide their Ways, and warm their Hearts. This Solicitude your Friends bring into those happy Moments, in which they are favoured with your Converse in private: And when you are retired from them, your Prayers I doubt not, largely contribute towards guarding your Country, watering the Church, and bleffing the World. Long may they continue to answer these great Ends: And permit me, Sir, to conclude, A 5

clude with expressing my chearful Considence, that in those best Moments You are often particularly mindful of one, who so highly esteems, so greatly needs, and so warmly returns that Remembrance, as,

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Your most Affectionate Brother,

And Obliged Humble Servant,

Northampton, Dec. 13, 1744.

P. Doddridge.

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PREFACE.

PREFACE.

THE several Hints given in the Dedication, and the First Chapter of this Treatise, which contains a particular Plan of the Design, render it unnecessary to introduce it with a long Preface. Some of my Readers may perhaps remember, that several Years ago I promised this Work to the Publick, in the Preface to the Second Edition of my Sermons on the Power and Grace of Christ, &c. My much honoured Friend, Dr. WATTS had laid the Scheme especially of the former Part: But as those Indispositions, with which (to the unspeakable Grief of the Churches) God has been pleased to exercise him, and forbid his Hopes of being able to add this, to his many Labours of Love to immortal Souls, he was pleased in a very affectionate and importunate Manner to urge me to undertake it. And I bless God with my whole Heart, not only that He hath carried me thro this delightful Task, (for such indeed I have found it,) but also that he hath spared that worthy and amiable Person to see it accomplished, and given him Strength and Spirit to review so considerable a Part of it. His Approbation, expressed in stronger Terms than Modesty will permit me to repeat, encourages me to hope, that it is executed in fuch a Manner, as may, by the Divine Bleffing, render it of some general And I therather expect it will be to, as it now comes Abroad into the World not only with my own Prayers and his, but also with those of many A-6 other other Pious Friends, which I have been particularly eareful to engage for its Success.

INTO whatever Hands this Work may come, I must desire, that before any pass their Judgment upon it, they would please to read it through; that they may discern the Connection between one Part of it and another. Which I the rather request, because I have long observed, that Christians of different Parties have been eagerly laying Hold on particular Parts of the System of Divine Truths, and have been contending about them as if each had been all; or as if the Separation of the Members from each other, and from the Head, were the Preservaton of the Body, instead of its Destruction. They have been zealons to espouse the Defence and to maintain the Honour and Ulefulness of each apart; whereas their Honour, as well as Usefulness, seem to me to lie much in their Connection. And Suspicions have often arisen betwixt the respective Defenders of each, which have appeared as unreasonable and absurd, as if all the Preparations for fecuring one Part of a Ship in a Storm were to be censured as a Contrivance to fink the Rest. I pray God, to give to all his Ministers and People, more and more of the Spirit, of Wisdom, and of Love, and of a Sound Mind; and to remove far from us those mutual Jealcufies and Animosities, which binder our acting with that Unanimity which is necessary in order to the successful carrying on of our common Warfare against the Enemies of Christianity. We may be fure, these Enemies will never fail to make their own Advantage of our multiplied Divisions, and severe Contests with each other: But they must necessarily lose both their Ground and their Influence, in Proportion to the Degree, in which the Energy of Christian Principles is felt, to unite

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unite and transform the Hearts of those by whom they are professed.

I TAKE this Opportunity of adding, that as this Treatise may be looked upon as the Sequel of my Sermons on Regeneration, the informething of a different Method; a Second Edition of these Sermons, is now published (in Compliance with the Request of many of my Friends,) in the same Form and Size with this Book. I have been solicitous to make them both as cheap as possible, that I may fall in with the charitable Designs of those who may propose to give them away. There is however an Edition of this Treatise in Ostavo, for such as rather chuse to have it in a larger Character and fairer Form.

I have studied the greatest plainness of speech, that the lowest of my Readers, may, if possible, be able to understand every Word; and I hope, Perfons of a more elegant Taste and refined Education will pardon what appeared to me so necessary a Piece of Charity. Such a Care in Practical Writings seems one important Instance of that benouring all Men, which our amiable and condescending Religion teaches us: And I have been particularly obliged to my worthy Patron, for what he hath done to shorten some of the Sentences, and to put my Meaning into plainer and more familiar Words. Yet I dare say, the World will not suspect it of having contracted any Impropriety or Inelegance of Language, by passing through the Hands of Dr. Watts.

I MUST add one Remark here, which I heartily wish I had not omitted in the first Edition, viz. That the I do in this Book consider my Reader as successively in a great Variety of supposed Circumstances, beginning with those of a thoughtless sunner, and leading him three several Stages of Conviction, Terror, &c. as what may be previous to his sincerely accepting

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accepting the Gospel, and devoting himself to the Service of GoD; yet I would by no means be thought to infinuate, that every one, who is brought to that happy Resolution, arrives at it thro' those particular steps, or feels Agitations of Mind equal in Degree to those I have described. Some Sense of Sin, and some serious and humbling Apprehension of our Danger and Misery in Consequence of it, must indeed be necessary, to dispose us to receive the Grace of the Gospel, and the Saviour who is there exhibited to our Faith. But God is pleased femetimes to begin the Work of his Grace on the Heart, almost from the first Dawning of Reason, and to carry it on by such gentle and insensible Degrees, that very excellent Persons, who have made the most eminent Attainments in the Divine Life, have been unable to recount any remarkable Hiftory of their Conversion: And so far as I can learn, this is most frequently the Case with those of them, who have enjoyed the Benefits of a pious Education, when it has not been succeeded by a vicious and licentious Youth. God forbid therefore, that any fuch should be so insensible of their own Happiness, as to fall into Perplexity with relation to their Spiritual State, for Want of being able to trace such a Rife of Religion in their Minds, as it was necessary on my Plan for me to describe, and exemplify I have spoken my Sentiments on this Head fo fully in the VIIIth of my Sermons on Regeneration, that I think none who has read and remembers the general Contents of it, can be in Danger of mistaking my Meaning here. But as it is very possible, this Book may fall into the Hands of many, who have not read the other, and have no Opportunity of consulting it, I thought it proper to insert this Caution in the Preface to this; and I am much obliged to that worthy and excellent Person, who kindly reminded me of the Expediency of doing it. I con-

I CONCLUDE with defiring my Friends to forgive the necessary Interruption which this Work has given to the Third Volume of my Family Expositor, which I am now fending to the Press as fast as I can, and hope to publish it in less than a Year. To this Volume I have referred feveral additional Notes, and the Indexes, which are necessary to render the former Volumes compleat; having determined to add nothing to the Second Edition, which should depreciate the former. I do not think it neceffary to trouble my Friends with a new Subscription; taking it for granted, that few who were pleafed with the other part of the Work, will fail of perfecting the Set on the Historical Books of the New Testament. When my Exposition on the Epistolary Part may be compleated, God only knows. I will proceed in it asfast as the other Duties of my Station will permit; and I earnestly beg, that if my Readers find Edification and Advantage by any of my Writings, that they would in Return offer a Prayer for me, that God may carry me on, in that most important Labour of my Pen, under the remarkable Tokens of His Guidance and Bleffing.

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RISE and PROGRESS

OF

RELIGION in the SOUL.

CHAP. I.

The Introduction to the Work, with some general Account of its Defign.

That true Religion is very rare, appears from comparing the Nature of it with the Lives and Characters of Men around us, §. 1, 2. The Want of it, Matter of just Lamentation, §. 3. To remedy this Evil, is the Design of the ensuing Treatise: §. 4. To which therefore, the Author earnestly bespeaks the Attention of the Reader, as his own Heart is deeply interested in it, §. 5, 6. A General Plan of the Work; of which the Fisteen sirst Chapters relate chiefly to the RISE of Religion, and the remaining Chapters to its PROGRESS. §. 7,—12. The Chapter concludes with a Prayer for the Success of the Work.

HEN we look round about us with an attentive Eye, and confider the Characters and Pursuits of Men, we plainly see, that tho in the original Constitution of their Natures, they only, of all the Creatures that dwell on the Face of the Earth, be capable of Religion, yet many of them shamefully neglect it. And whatever different Notions People

People may entertain of what they call Religion, all must agree in owning, that it is very far from being an

Sniverfal thing.

6. 2. RELIGION, in its most general View, is such a Sense of God on the Soul, and such a Conviction of our Obligations to Him, and of our Dependence upon Him, as shall engage us to make it our great Care, to conduct ourselves in a Manner, which we have Reason to believe will be pleasing to Him. Now when we have given this plain Account of Religion, it is by no Means necessary, that we should search among the Savages of the African or American Nations, to find Instances of those who are Strangers to it. When we view the Conduct of the Generality of People at Home, in a Christian and Protestant Nation, in a Nation whose Obligations to God have been fingular, almost beyond those of any other People under Heaven, will any one presume to say, that Religion has an univerfal Reign among us? Will any one suppose, that it prevails in every Life? that it reigns in every Heart? Alas, the avowed Infidelity, the Prophanation of the Name and Day of Goo, the Drunkenness, the Lewdness, the Injustice, the Falsehood, the Pride, the Prodigality, the base Selfishness, and stupid Insensibility of the Spiritual and Eternal Interests of themselves and others, which so generally appear among us, loudly proclaim the contrary. So that one would imagine upon this View, that Thousands and ten Thousands thought the Negled, and even the Contempt of Religion, were a Glory, rather than a Reproach. And where is the Neighbourhood, where is the Society, where is the happy Family, (confisting of any considerable Number) in which on a more exact Examination, we find Reason to say, " Religion fills even this little Circle ." There is perhaps, a Freedom from any gross and scandalous Immoralities, an external Decency of Behaviour, an Attendance on the outward Forms of Worship in Publick, and (bere and there) in the Family; yet amidst all this, there is nothing which looks like the genuine Actings of the Spiritual and Divine Life. There is no Appearance of Love to God, no Reverence for his Presence, no Desire of his Favours as the highest Good: There is no cordial Belief of the Gofpel of Salvation; no eager Solicitude to efcape

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Chap. 1.

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escape that Condemnation which we have incurred by Sinno hearty Concern to secure that Eternal Life, which Christ has purchased and secured for his People, and which he freely promises to all who will receive him. Alas! whatever the Love of a Friend, or even of a Parent can do: whatever Inclination there may be, to hope all Things, and believe all Things, the most savourable; Evidence to the contrary will force itself upon the Mind, and extort the unwilling Conclusion; that, whatever else may be amiable in this dear Friend, in that savorite

Child, " Religion dwells not in its Breaft."

6. 3. To a Heart that firmly believes the Gospel, and views Persons and Things in the light of Eternity, this is one of the most mournful Considerations in the World. And indeed to fuch a one, all the other Calamities and Evils of Human Nature appear Trifles, when compared with this; the Absence of real Religion, and that Contrariety to it which reigns in so many Thousands of Mankind. Let this be cured, and all the other Evils will eafily be borne; nay, Good will be extracted out of them. But if this coptinue, it bringeth forth Fruit unto Death (a); and in Consequence of it, Multitudes, who share the Entertainments of an indulgent Providence with us, and are at least allied to us by the Bond of the same common Nature, must in a few Years be swept away into utter Destruction, and be plunged beyond Redemption into everlasting Burnings.

§. 4. I pour t not, but there are many, under those various Forms of Religious Profession, which have so unhappily divided us in this Nation, who are not only lamenting this in publick, if their Office in Life calls them to an Opportunity of doing it; but are likewise mourning before God in Secret, under a Sense of this sad State of Things; and who can appeal to him that searches all Hearts, as to the Sincerity of their Desires to revive the languishing Cause of vital Christianity and substantial Piety. And, among the rest, the Author of this Treatise may with Considence say, It is this which animates him to the present Attempt, in the midst of so many other Cares and Labours. For this, he is willing to lay aside many of those curious Amusements in Science which

The Author's Design to promote Religion. Chap. 1. might suit his own private Taste, and perhaps open a Way to some Reputation in the learned World. For this, he is willing to wave the laboured Ornaments of Speech, that he may, if possible, descend to the Capacity of the lowest Part of Mankind. For this, he would endeavour to convince the Judgment, and to reach the Heart of every Reader: And, in a Word, for this, without any Dread of the Name of an Enthusiast, who ever may at random throw it out upon the Occasion, he would, as it were, enter with you into your Closet, from Day to Day; and, with all Plainness and Freedom, as well as Seriousness, would discourse to you of the great Things which he has learnt from the Christian Revelation, and on which he affuredly knows your everlasting Happiness to depend: That if you hitherto have lived without Religion, you may be now awakened to the Confideration of it, and may be instructed in its Nature and Importance; or that if you are already, thro' Divine Grace, experimentally acquainted with it, you may be affisted to make a farther Progress.

5. 5. Bur he earnestly intreats this Favour of you, that as it is plainly a ferious Rufinels we are entering upon, you would be pleased to give him a serious and an attentive Hearing. He intreats, that these Addresses, and these Meditations, may be perused at Leisure, and be thought over in Retirement; and that you would do him and yourfelf the Justice, to believe the Representations which are here made, and the Warnings which are here given, to proceed from Sincerity and Love; from an Heart, which would not defignedly give one Moment's unnecessary Pain to the meanest Creature on the Face of the Earth, and much less to any Human Mind. If he be importunate, it is, because he at least imagines, that there is just Reason for it; and fears, lest amidft the Multitudes, who are undone by the utter Neglect of Religion, and among those who are greatly damaged for Want of a more resolute and constant Attendance to it, this may be the Case of some into whose Hands this Treatise may fall.

6. 6. He is a Barbarian, and deserves not to be called a Man, who can look upon the Sorrows of his Fellow-Creatures without drawing out his Soul unto them, and wifting

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wishing, at least, that it were in the Power of his Hand o help them. Surely Earth would be an Heaven to that Man, who could go about from Place to Place scattering Happiness wheresoever he came, though it were only the Body that he were capable of relieving, and tho' he could mpart nothing better than the Happiness of a mortal Life. But the Happiness rifes, in proportion to the Naure and Degree of the Good which he imparts. Ha rby, are we ready to fay, were those honoured Servants of Christ, who, in the early Days of his Church, were the benevolent and sympathizing Instruments of conveying niraculous Healing to those whose Cases seemed despeate; who poured in upon the blind and the Deaf the Pleasures of Light and Sound, and called up the Dead to he Powers of Action and Enjoyment. But this is an Hoyour and Happiness, which it is not fit for God commonly to bestow on mortal Men. Yet there have been in every Age, and blessed be his Name, there still are those, whom he has condescended to make his Instruments in conveying nobler and more latting Bleffings than these to their Fellow-Creatures. Death hath long fince veiled the Eyes, and stopped the Ears of those, who were the Subjects of miraculous Healing, and recovered its Empire over those who were once recalled from the Grave. But the Souls who are prevailed upon to receive the Gospel, live for ever. God has owned the Labours of his faithful Ministers in every Age, to produce these blessed Effects; and some of them being dead, yet speak (b) with Power and Success in this important Cause. Wonder not then, if living and dying, I be ambitious of this Honour; and if my Mouth be freely opened, where I can ruly fay, my Heart is enlarged (c).

§. 7. In forming my general Plan I have been solicitous, that this little Treatife might, if possible, be useful to all its Readers, and contain something suitable to each. I will therefore take the Man and the Christian, in a great Variety of Circumstances. I will first suppose myself addressing to one of the vast Number of thoughtless Creatures, who have hitherto been utterly unconcerned about Religion; and will try what can be done, by all Plainness and Earnestness of Address, to awaken bim

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from this fatal Lethargy, to a Care, (Chap 2.) and affectionate and an immediate Care, about it. (Chap. 3.) [will labour to fix a deep and awful Conviction of Guill upon his Conscience, (Chap. 4.) and to flrip him of his vain Excuses and his flattering Hopes. (Chap. 5.) I will read to him, Oh! that I could fix on his Heart, that Sentence, that dreadful Sentence, which a Righteous and an Almighty God hath denounced against him, as a Sinner; (Chap. 6.) and endeavour to shew him, in how helpless a State he lies under this Condemnation, as to any Capacity he has of delivering himself. (Chap. 7.) But I do not mean to leave any in fo terrible a Situation: I will joy. fully proclaim the glad Tidings of Pardon and Salvation by Christ Jesus our Lord, which is all the Support and Confidence of my own Soul: (Chap. 8.) And then I will give fome general View of the Way, by which this Salvation is to be obtained : (Chap. 9.) urging the Sinner to accept of it, as affectionately as I can; (Chap 10.) tho' nothing can be sufficiently pathetic, where, as in this Matter, the Life of an immortal Soul is in question.

6. 8. Too probable it is, that some will, after all this, remain infensible; and therefore, that their sad Case may not incumber the following Articles, I shall here take folemn Leave of them: (Chap. 11.) And then shall turn and address myself, as compassionately as I can, to a most and address myself, as compassionately as I can, to a most stand address myself, as compassionately as I can, to a most stand contrary Character: I mean to a Soul overwhelmed with preva a Sense of the greatness of its Sins, and trembling under the Burthen, as if there were no more Hope for him Degree in GOD, (Chap. 12.) And that nothing may be omitted, which may give folid Peace to the troubled Spirit, deliber I shall endeavour to guide its Enquiries as to the Evidence of the of sincere Repentance and Fuith; (Chap. 13., which will be farther illustrated by a more particular View of the soul serveral Branches of the Christian Temper, such as majinto a ferve at once to affist the Reader in judging what he is notice and to shew him what he should labour to be. (Chap Life; 14.) This will naturally lead to a View of the Need we have have of the Irsuences of the blessed Spirit, to affist us it from the important and difficult Work of the true Christia. Rega the important and difficult Work of the true Christia and of the Encouragement we have to bope for the freque Divine Afflances. (Chap. 15.) In an humble Depen Path,

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dence on which, I shall then enter on the Consideration of feveral Cafes which often occur in the Christian Life, in which particular Addresses to the Conscience may be

requifite and useful.

§. 9. As some particular Difficulties and Discourage. ments attend the first Entrance on a religious Course, it will here be our first Care to animate the young Convert against them. (Chap. 16.) And that it may be done more effectually, I shall urge a folemn Dedication of himfelf to God; (Chap. 17.) to be confirmed by entering into the full Communion of the Church by an Approach to the Sacred Table. (Chap. 18.) That these Engagements. may be more happily fulfilled, we shall endeavour to draw a more particular Plan of that devout, regular, and accurate Courfe, which ought daily to be attended to: (Chap. 19.) And because the Idea will probably rise so much higher, than what is the general Practice, even of Good Men, we shall endeavour to persuade the Reader to make the Attempt, hard as it may feem; (Chap. 20.) and shall caution him against various Temptations, which might 115, otherwise draw him aside to Negligence and Sin. (Cb. 21.)

nay 6. 10 HAPPY will it be for the Reader, if these Exhortations and Cautions be attended to with becoming um Regard; but as it is, alas, too probable, that notwithnot standing all, the Infirmities of Nature will sometimes with prevail, we shall consider the Case of Deadness and Law-un our in Religion, which often steals upon us by insensible guor in Religion, which often steals upon us by insensible Degrees; (Chap. zz.) from whence there is too easy a bin Degrees; (Chap. 22.) from whence there is too easy a mit Passage to that terrible one of a Return into known and chirt deliberate Sin. (Chap. 23.) And as the one or the other deliberate Sin. (Chap. 23.) And as the one or the other lence of these tends, in a proportionable Degree, to provoke will the Blessed God to hide his Face, and his injured Spirit to withdraw, that melancholy Condition will be taken may into a particular Survey. (Chap. 24.) I shall then take he is Notice also of the Case of great and heavy Afsictions in Chap Life; (Chap. 25) a Discipline which the best of Men have Reason to expect, especially when they backstide us in from God, and yield to their Spiritual Enemies.

§. 11. Instances of this Kind, will, I fear, he too the frequent; yet, I trust, there will be many others, whose dense Path, like the dawning Light, will shine more and more dense.

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until the terfect Day (d). And therefore we shall endeavour in the best Manner we can, to assist the Christian in possing a true Judgment on the Growth of Grace in his Heart; (Chap. 26.) as we had done before in judging of its Sincerity. And as nothing conduces more to the Advance of Grace, than the lively Exercise of Love to God, and a boly Joy in him, we shall here remind the real Christian of those Mercies which tend to excite that Love and Joy; (Chap. 27.) and, in the Views of them, to animate him to those vigorous Efforts of Usefulness in Life, which so well become his Character, and will have to happy an Efficacy on brightning his Crown, (Chap. 28) Supposing him to act accordingly, we shall then labour to illustrate and affift the Delight, with which he may look forward to the awful Solemnities of Death and Judgment: (Chap. 29.) And shall close the Scene by accompanying him, as it were, to the nearest Confines of that dark Valley, thro' which he is to pass to Glory; giving him such Directions, as may feem most subservient to his honouring Gob, and adorning Religion, by his dying Behaviour. (Chap. 30) Noram I without a pleasing Hope, that, thro' the divine Bleffing and Grace, I may be in some Instances so successful, as to leave those triumphing in the Views of Judgment and Eternity, and glorifying God by a truly Christian Life and Death, whom I found trembling in the Apprehensions of future Misery; or perhaps, in a much more dangerous and miserable Circumstance than that; I mean, entirely forgetting the Prospect, and funk into the most stupid Infensibility of those Things, for an Attendance to which the Human Mind was formed, and in Comparison of which, all the Pursuits of this transitory Life are emptier than Wind, and lighter than a Feather.

§. 12. Such a Variety of Heads must, to be sure, be handled but briefly, as we intend to bring them within the Bulk of a moderate Volume. I shall not, therefore, discuss them, as a Preacher might properly do in Sermons, in which the Truths of Religion are professedly to be explained and taught, defended and improved, in a wide Variety, and long Detail of Propositions, Arguments, Objections, Replies, and Interences, marshall'd and

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and number'd under their distinct Generals. I shall here fpeak in a loofer and freer Manner, as a Friend to a Friend, just as I would do, if I were to be in Person admitted to a private Audience, by one whom I tenderly loved, and whose Circumstances and Character, I knew to be like that, which the Title of one Chapter or another of this Treatife describes. And when I have discoursed with him a little while, which will feldom be fo long as Half an Hour; I shall, as it were, step aside, and leave him to meditate on what he has heard, or endeavour to affist him in such fervent Addresses to God, as it may be proper to mingle with those Meditations. In the mean Time, I will here take the Liberty to pray over my Reader and my Work; and to commend it folemnly to the Divine Bleffing, in Token of my deep Conviction of an entire Dependence upon it. And I am well persuaded, that Sentiments like these are common, in the general, to every faithful Minister, to every real Christian.

APRAYER for the Success of this Work in promoting the Rise and Progress of Religion.

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OH Thou great Eternal Original, and Author of "all created Being and Happiness! I adore "Thee who hast made Man a Creature capable of Re-" ligion, and hast bestowed this Dignity and Felicity up-" on our Nature, that it may be taught to fay, Where " is GOD our Maker (e)? I lament that Degeneracy. " spread over the whole Human Race, which has turned " our Glory into Shame (f), and has render'd the Forget-" fulness of God unnatural as it is) so common, and " so universal a Disease. Holy Father, we know it is " Thy Presence, and Thy teaching alone, that can re-" claim thy wandering Children; can impress a Sense " of Divine Things on the Heart, and render that Senfe " latting and effectual. From Thee proceed all good. " Purpofes and Defires; and this Defire above all, of -" diffusing Wisdom, Piety and Happiness in this World, " which (tho' funk in such deep Apollacy) Thine infi-" nite Mercy has not utterly forlaken.

(e) Job xxxv. 10. (f) Hof. iv. 7.

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" THOU knowest, O LORD, the Hearts of the Children " of Men (g); and an upright Soul, in the midft of as all the Censures and Suspicions it may meet with, re-" joices in thine intimate Knowledge of its most fecret " Sentences and Pinciples of Action. Thou knowest " the Sincerity and Fervency, with which Thine unworthy Servant defires to spread the Knowledge of Thy " Name, and the Savour of Thy Gospel, among all to whom this Work may reach. Thou knowest, that hadst thou given him an Abundance of this World, it would have been in his Esteem, the noblest Pleasure that " Abundance could have afforded, to have been Thine Almoner, in distributing thy Bounties to the Indigent and Necessitous, and so causing the forrowful Heart to " rejoice in thy Goodness, dispensed thro' his Hands, "Thou knowest, that hadst Thou given him, either by ordinary or extraordinary Methods, the Gifts of Healing, it would have been his daily Delight, to relieve the Pains, the Maladies, and the Infirmities of Men's " Bodies; to have feen the languishing Countenance, " brightened by returning Health and Chearfulness; and " much more to have beheld the roving distracted Mind, " reduced to Calmness and Serenity, in the Exercise of " its rational Faculties. Yet happier, far happier will he think himself, in those humble Circumstances, in which Thy Providence hath placed him, if thou vouchfafe to honour These his feeble Endeavours, as the " Means of relieving and enriching Men's Minds; of recovering them from the Madness of a sinful State, " and bringing back Thy reasonable Creatures to the Knowledge, the Service, and the Enjoyment of their "God; or of improving those, who are already reduced. "O MAY it have that bleffed Influence on the Person " whofoever he be, that is now reading these Lines, and on all who may read or hear them! Let not my " LORD be angry, if I presume to ask, That however " weak and contemptible this Work may feem in the Eyes of the Children of this World, and however imperfed it really be, as well as the Author of it un-" worthy, it may nevertheless live before Thee, and " thre'

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" thro' a divine Power, be mighty to produce the Rife " and Progress of Religion in the Minds of Multitudes " in distant Places, and in Generations yet to come! " Impute it not, O Gop, as a culpable Ambition, if I defire, that whatever becomes of my Name, about which I would not lofe one Thought before Thee, " this Work, to which I am now applying myself in "Thy Strength, may be compleated and propagated " far Abroad; that it may reach to those that are yet " unborn, and teach them Thy Name and Thy Praise, " when the Author has long dwelt in the Dust: That " fo when he shall appear before Thee in the great Day of final Account, his Joy may be increased, and his " Crown brightened, by Numbers before unknown to " each other, and to him! But if this Petition be too " great to be granted to one, who pretends no Ciaim, " but Thy Sovereign Grace, to hope for being favoure ed with the least, give him to be in Thine Almighty " Hand the bleffed Instrument of Converting and Sav-" ing one Soul: And if it be but one, and that the weak-" eit and meanest of those who are capable of receiving " this Address, it shall be most thankfully accepted as " a rich Recompense for all the Thought and Labour " it may cost; and though it should be amidst a Thou-" fand Disappointments with respect to others, yet it " shall be the Subject of immortal Songs of Praise to "Thee, O bleffed God, for and by every Soul, whom, " thro' the Blood of Jesus and the Grace of thy Spirit, "Thou hast faved; and everlasting Honours shall be " ascribed to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, " by the innumerable Company of Angels, and by the Gene-" ral Assembly and Church of the First-born in Heaven, " Amen.

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CHAP. II.

The Careless Sinner awakened.

It is too supposeable a Case, that this Treatise may come into such Hands: §. 1, 2. Since many, not grossly vicious, fall under that Character. §. 3. 4. A more particular Illustration of this Case, with an Appeal to the Reader, whether it be not his own. §. 5, 6. Expostulation with such; §. 7.—9. More particularly, (1.) From acknowledged Principles, relating to the Nature of GOD, his universal Presence, Agency, and Persection. §. 10.—12. (2.) From a View of Personal Obligations to him. §. 13. (3.) From the Danger of this Neglect, when considered in its Aspect on a future State. §. 14. An Appeal to the Conscience as already convinced. §. 15. Transition to the Subject of the next Chapter. §. 16. The Meditation of a Sinner, who having been long thoughtless begins to be awakened.

SHAMEFULLY and fatally as Religion is neglected in the World, yet bleffed be God it has some sincere Disciples; Children of Wisdom, by whom, even in this soolish and degenerate Age, it is justified (a); who having, by Divine Grace, been brought to the Knowledge of GOD in Christ, have faithfully devoted their Hearts to him, and by a natural Consequence are devoting their Lives to his Service. Could I be fure this Treatise would fall into no Hands but theirs, my Work would be shorter, easier, and pleasanter.

§. 2. But among the Thousands that neglect religion, it is more than possible, that some of my Readers may be included: And I am so deeply affected with their unhappy Case, that the Temper of my Heart, as well as the proper Method of my Subject, leads me in the first Piace

(a) Matt. ix. 19.

Place to address myself to such; to apply to every one of them; and therefore to sou, O Reader, whoever you are, who may come under the Denomination of a care-

less Sinner.

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§. 3. Be not, I befeech you, angry at the Name. The Physicians of Souls must speak plainly, or they may murder those whom they should cure. I would make no harsh and unreasonable Supposition. I would charge you with nothing more, than is absolutely necessary to convince you, that you are the Person to whom I speak. I will not, therefore, imagine you to be a prophane and abandoned Profligate. I will not suppose, that you allow yourfelf to blaspheme God, to dishonour his Name. by cultomary Swearing, or grossly to violate his Sabbath, or commonly to neglect the Solemnities of his publick Worship: I will not imagine that you have injured your Neighbours, in their Lives, their Chastity, or their Possessions, either by Violence, or by Fraud; or that you have scandalously debased the rational Nature of Man, by that vile Intemperance, which transforms us into the worlt kind of Brutes, or something beneath them.

§. 4. In Opposition to all this, I will suppose, that you believe the Existence and Providence of God, and the Truth of Christianity, as a Revelation from Him: Of which, if you have any Doubt, I must desire, that you would immediately seek your satisfaction elsewhere*. I say, Immediately; Because not to believe it, is in Effect to disbelieve it; and will make your ruin equally certain, though perhaps it may leave it less aggravated, than if Contempt and Opposition had been added to Suspicion and Neglect. But supposing you to be a nominal Christian, and not a Deist, or a Sceptick; I will also suppose your Conduct among Men to be not only blameless, but amiable; and that they who know you most intimately, must acknowledge, that you are just and sober, humane and courteous, compassionate and

B 5 liberal:

^{*} In such a Case, I beg Leave to refer the Reader to my Three Sermons on the Evidence of Christianity; the last of the Ten on the Sower and Grace of Christ: in which he may see the hitherto un thaken Foundations of my own Faith, in a short, and, I hope, a clear View.

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liberal: Yet with all this, you may lack that one Thing (b)

on which your Eternal Happiness depends.

6. 5 I Beseech you, Reader, whoever you are, that you would now look feriously into your own Heart, and ask it this one plain Question, Am I truly religious? Is the Love of God the governing Principle of my Life? Do I walk under a Sense of his Presence? Do I converse with him from Day to Day, in the Exercise of Prayer and Praise? And am I, on the Whole, making his Service my Bufiness and my Delight, regarding him as my

Master and my Father?

§. 6. It is my present Business only to address myself to the Person, whose Conscience answers in the Negative. And I would address with equal Plainness, and equal Freedom, to High and Low, to Rich and Poor: To you, who (as the Scripture with a dreadful Propriety expresses it) live without GOD in the World (c); and while in Words and Forms, you oron GOD, deny him in your Actions (d), and behave yourselves in the main, (a few external Ceremonies only excepted,) just as you would do, if you believed, and were fure, there was no GOD. Unhappy Creature, whoever you are! your own Heart condemns you immediately; and how much more that GOD who is greater than your Heart, and knoweth all Things (e). He is in Secret (f) as well as in Publick; and Words cannot express the Delight, with which his Children converse with him alone; But in Secret you acknowledge bim not; you neither pray to him, nor praise him, in your Retirements. Accounts, Correspondencies, Studies may often bring you into your Closet; but if nothing but Devotion were to be transacted there, it would be to you quite an unfrequented Place. And thus you go on from Day to Day, in a continual Forgetfulness of GoD; and are as thoughtless about Religion, as if you had long fince demonstrated it to yourself, that it was a mere Dream. Ifindeed, you are fick, you will perhaps cry to God for Health; in any extreme Danger, you will lift up your Eyes and Voice for Deliverance: But as for the Pardon of Sin, and the other Bleffings of the Gospel, you are

⁽b) Mark x. 21.

⁽c) Eph. ii. 12.

⁽d) Tit. 1. 16.

⁽e) 1 John 111, 20, (f) Matth. vi. 6.

not at all inwardly folicitous about them; tho' you profess to believe, that the Gospel is Divine, and the Blesfings of it Eternal. All your Thoughts, and all your Hours, are divided between the Bufiness and the Amusements of Life: And if now and then, an awful Providence, or a serious Sermon or Book, awakens you, it is but a few Days, or it may be a few Hours, and you are the fame careless Creature you ever were before. On the whole, you act, as if you were refolved to put it to the Venture, and at your own Expence to make the Experiment, whether the Consequences of neglecting Religion be indeed as terrible, as its Ministers and Friends have reprefented. Their Remonstrances do indeed sometimes force themselves upon you, as (considering the Age and Coun. try in which you live,) it is hardly possible entirely to avoid them; but you have, it may be, found out the Art of Isaiah's People, Hearing to hear, and not understand; and seeing to see, and not perceive : Your Heart is waxed grofs, your Eyes are closed, and your Ears beauy. (g) Under the very Ordinances of Worship, your Thoughts are at the Ends of the Earth (h). Every Amusement of the Imagination is welcome, if it may but lead away your Mind from so insipid, and so disagreeable a Subject as Religion. And probably the very last Time you were in a worshipping Assembly, you managed, just as you would have done, if you had thought God knew nothing of your Behaviour; or as if you did not think it worth one fingle Care, whether he were pleased or displeased with it.

§. 7. ALAS! is it then come to this, with all your Belief of God, and Providence, and Scripture, That Religion is not worth a Thought! That it is not worth one Hour's serious Consideration and Reslection, "What "GOD and Christ are; and what you yourselves are, "and what you must hereafter be?" Where then are all your rational Faculties? How are they employed, or rather, how are they stupised and benumbed?

§. 8. THE Certainty and Importance of the Things of which I speak, are so evident, from the Principles which you yourselves grant, that one might almost set a Child or an Idiot to reason upon them. And yet they are neglected by those, who are grown up to Understanding,

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⁽g) Ifai. vi. 9, 10.

⁽h) Prov. xvii. 24.

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and perhaps some of them to such Resinement of Understanding, that they would think themselves greatly injured, if they were not to be reckoned among the Politer, and the more Learned part of Mankind.

§. 9. But it is not your Neglect, Sirs, that can deferoy the Being or Importance of such Things as these. It may indeed destroy you, but it cannot in the least affect them. Permit me therefore, having been myself awakened, to come to each of you, and say, as the Mariners did to Jonah, while asseep in the midst of a much less dangerous Storm, What meanest thou, O Sleeper? Arise and call upon thy GOD (i). Do you doubt as to the Reasonableness, or Necessity, of doing it? I will demand, and answer me (k): Answer me to your own Conscience, as one that must, ere long, render another Kind of Account.

6. 10. You own, that there is a GOD: And well you may: For you cannot open your Eyes, but you must fee the evident Proofs of his Being, his Presence, and his Agency. You behold him around you in every Object. You feel him within you, if I may to speak, in every Vein, and in every Nerve. You fee, and you feel, not only that he hath formed you with an exquisite Wisdom, which no mortal Man could ever fully explain or comprehend, but that he is continually near you, wherever you are, and however you are employed, by Day or by Night; in Him you live and move, and have your Being (1). Common Sense will tell you, that it is not your own Wildom, and Power, and Attention, that causes your Heart to beat, and your Blood to circulate; that draws in, and fends out that Breath of Life, that precarious Breath of a most uncertain Life, that is in your Noftrils (m). These Things are done when you sleep, as well as in those waking Moments, when you think not of the Circulation of the Blood, or of the Necessity of Breathing, nor so much as to recollect that you have a Heart and Lungs. Now what is this, but the Hand of God, perpetually supporting and actuating those curious Machines that He has made?

§. 11.

⁽i) Jon. i. 6.

⁽k) Job xxxviii. 3.

⁽¹⁾ Acts xvii. 28.

6. 11. Nor is this His Care limited to you; but if you look all around you, far as your Views can reach, you see it extending itself on every Side: And Oh how much farther than you can trace it? Reflect on the Light and Heat, which the Sun every where dispenses! on the Air, which furrounds all our Globe, on the right Temperature of which the Life of the whole Human Race depends, and that of all the inferior Creatures which dwell on the Earth. Think of the fuitable and plentiful Provision made for Man and Beast; the Grass, the Grain, the Variety of Fruits, and Herbs, and Flowers; every Thing that nourishes us, every Thing that delights us; and fay, whether it do not speak plainly and loudly, that our Almighty Maker is near, and that he is careful of us, and kind to us. And while all these Things proclaim His Goodness, do they not also proclaim his Power! For what Power has any Thing comparable to that, which furnishes out those Gifts of Royal Bounty; and which, unwearied and unchanged, produces continually from Day to Day, and from Age to Age, fuch altonishing and Magnificent Effects over the Face of the whole Earth, and thro' all the Regions of Heaven?

6. 12. It is then evident, that GOD is prefent, prefent with you at this Moment; even GOD your Creator and Preserver, GOD the Creator and Preserver of the whole visible and invisible World. And is He not present as a most observant and attentive Being? He that formed the Eve, shall not He see? He that planted the Ear, shall not He bear? He that teaches Man Knowledge, that gives him his rational Faculties, and pours in upon his opening Mind all the Light it receives by them, shall not He know (n)? He who sees all the Necessities of his Creatures so seasonably to provide for them, shall He not fee their Actions too; and feeing, shall He not judge them? Has He given us a Sense and Discernment of what is good and evil, of what is true and falle, of what is fair and deformed in Temper and Conduct; and has He himself no Discernment of these Things? Trifle not with your Conscience, which tells you at once, that He judges of it, and approves or condemns, as it

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is decent or indecent, reasonable or unreasonable; and that the Judgment which he passes; is of infinite Im-

portance to all his Creatures.

§. 13. And now, to apply all this to your own Cafe, let me feriously ask you, Is it a decent and reasonable Thing, that this great and glorious Benefactor should be neglected by his rational Creatures? by those, that are capable of attaining to some Knowledge of him, and prefenting to him some Homage? Is it decent and reasonable that he should be forgotten and neglected by you? Are you alone of all the Works of his Hands, forgotten or neglected by him? Oh Sinner, thoughtless as you are, you cannot dare to fay that, or even to think it. You need not go back to the helpless days of your Infancy and Childhood, to convince you of the contrary. You need not, in order to this, to recollect the remarkable Deliverances, which, perhaps, were wrought out for you many years ago. The Repose of the last Night, the Refreshment and Comfort you have received this Day; yea, the mercies you are receiving this very Moment, bear witness to him; and yet you regard him not. Ungrateful Creature that you are! Cou'd you have treated any Human Benefactor thus? Could you have borne to neglect a kind Parent, or any generous Friend, that had but a few Months acted the Part of a Parent to you? to have taken no Notice of him, while in his Presence; to have returned him no Thanks; to have had no Contrivances to make some little Acknowledgment for all his Goodness? Human Naure, bad as it is, is not fallen so low. Nay, the Brutal Nature is not fo low as this. Surely every Domestic Animal round you must shame such Ingratitude. If you do but for a few Days take a little kind Notice of a Dog, and feed him with the Refuse of your Table, he will wait upon you and love to be near you; he will be eager to follow you from Place to Place, or when, after a little Absence, you retuen Home, will try by a thousand fond transported Motions, to tell you how much he rejoices to see you again. Nay, Brutes, far less fagacious and apprehensive, have some Sente of our Kindness, and express it after their Way : As the blessed Gon condescends to observe, in this very View in which I mention it, The dull Ox knows its owner, and the stupid As his Masser's Crib (0): What lamentable Degeneracy therefore is it, that you do not know, that you, who have been numbered among God's professing People, do not, and will not consider your numberless Obligations to him.

6. 14. SURELY, if you have any Ingenuity of Temper, you must be ashamed and grieved in the Review: But if you have not, give me leave farther to exposulate with you on this Head, by feeting it in something of a different Light. Can you think yourselves safe, while you are acting a part like this? Do you not in your Conscience believe, there will be a future Judgment? Do you not believe there is an invisible and eternal World? As professed Christians, we all believe it; for it is no controverted Point, but displayed in Scripture with so clear an Evidence, that, subtile and ingenious as Men are in Error, they have not yet found out a Way to evade it. And believing this, do you not fee, that white you are thus wandering from God, Destruction and Misery are in your Ways (p)? Will this Indolence and Negligence of Temper be any Security to you? Will it guard you from Death? Will it excuse you from Judgment? You might much more reasonably expect, that shutting your Eyes would be a Defence against the Rage of a devouring Lion; or that looking another Way would fecure your Body from being pierced by a Bullet or a Sword. When God speaks of the Extravagant Folly of some thoughtless Creatures, who would hearken to no Admonition now, he adds, in a very awful Manner: In the latter Day they shall consider it perfectly (q). And is not this applicable to you? Must you not sooner or later, be brought to think of these Things, whether you will or no? And, in the mean Time, do you not certainly know, that timely and serious Resection upon them is, thro' Divine Grace, the only Way to prevent your Ruin?

§. 15. Yes Sinner, I need not multiply words on a Subject like this. Your Confcience is already inwardly convinced, tho' your Pride may be unwilling to own it. And, to prove it, let me ask you one Question more: Would you upon any Terms and Confiderations whatever, come to a Resolution absolutely to dismiss all far-

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ther Thought of Religion, and all Care about it, from this Day and Hour, and to abide by the Confequences of that Neglect? I believe hardly any Man living would be bold enough to determine upon this. I believe, most of my Readers would be ready to tremble at the Thought of it.

6. 16. Bur if it be necessary to take these Things into Consideration at all, it is necessary to do it quickly; for Life itself is not so very long, nor so certain, that a wife Man should risk much upon its Continuance.

And I hope to convince you, when I have another Hearing, that it is necessary to do it immediately; and that next to the Madness of resolving, You will not think of Religion at all, is that of faying, You will think of it bereafter. In the mean Time, pause on the Hints which have been already given, and they will prepare you to receive what is to be added on that Head.

The MEDITATION of a Sinner, who was once thoughtless, but begins to be awakened.

WAKE, Oh my forgetful Soul, awake from " these wandering Dreams. Turn thee from " this Chace of Vanity, and for a little while be per-" fuaded by all these Considerations, to look forward, " and to look upward, at least for a few Moments. Suf-" ficient are the Hours, and Days given to the La-" bours and Amusements of Life. Grudge not a short " Allotment of Minutes, to view thyfelf and thine own " more immediate Concerns; to reflect, who, and what "thou art; how it comes to pass, that thou art here,

" and what thou must quickly be!

" It is indeed, as thou hast seen it now represented " Oh my Soul! Thou art the Creature of GOD; form-" ed and furnished by him, and lodged in a Body, " which He provided, and which He supports; a Body, " in which he intended thee only a transitory Abode. 6 Oh, think how soon this Tabernacle must be diffelved " (r), and thou must return to GOD (s), And shall HE, " the One, Infinite, Eternal, Ever-bleffed, and Ever-" glorious Being, shall HE be least of all regarded by " thee

(y) Pfal. x. 4.

" thee? Wilt thou live and die with this Charafter, " faying, by every Action of every Day, unto GOD; " Depart from me, for I defire not the Knowledge of Thy " Ways (t)? The Morning, the Day, the Evening, " the Night, every Period of Time has its Excuses for this Neglest. But, Oh, my Soul, what will these Ex-" cufes appear, when examined by his penetrating Eye! They may delude me : but they cannot impose upon Him. " On Thou injured, neglected, provoked Benefactor! When I think, but for a Moment or two, of all Thy " Greatness, and of all Thy Goodness, I am aftonished " at this Infensibility, which hath prevailed in mine " Heart, and even still prevails. I blush and am conis founded to lift up my face before Thee (u). On the most " transient Review, I see, that I have played the Fool, that · I have erred exceedingly(x). And yet this stupid Heart a of mine would make its having neglected Thee fo " long, a Reason for going on to neglect Thee. I own, it might justly be expected, that, with Regard to Thee, " every one of Thy Rational Creatures should be all . Duty and Love: That each Heart should be full of a Sense of Thy Presence; and that a Care to please Thee " should swallow up every other Care. Yet thou bast not been in all my Thoughts (y); and Religion, the End and "Glory of my Nature, has been fo strangely overlooked " that I have hardly ever feriously asked my own Heart, what it is .- I know, if Matters rest here, I perish, and " yet, I feel in my perverse Nature, a secret Indispo-" fition to pursue these Thoughts: a Proneness, if not " entirely to dismiss them, yet to lay them aside for the " present. My Mind is perplexed and divided; but I am " fure, Thou who madest me, knowest what is best for " me. I therefore beseech Thee, that Thou wilt, for "Thy Name's fake, lead me and guide me (z). Let me not " delay, till it is for ever too late. Pluck me as a Brand "out of the Burning (a). Oh break this fatal Enchantment " that holds down my Affection to Objects, which my " Judgment comparatively despises! And let me at " length, come into so happy a State of Mind, that I may " not (1) Job xxi. 14. (u) Ezr. ix. 6. (x) 1 Sam. xxvi. 21.

(z) Pfal. xxx1. 3.

(a) A mos iv. 11.

of aot be afraid to think of Thee, and of myfelf; and may not be tempted to wish, that Thou hadst not made me, or that Thou coulds for ever forget me;

" that it may not be my best Hope, to perish like the

Brutes.

" IF what I shall farther read here, be agreeable to Truth and Reason; if it be calculated to promote my " Happiness, and is to be regarded as an Intimation of " Thy Will and Pleasure to me; Oh Gon, let me hear " and obey! Let the Words of thy Servant, when pleading Thy Cause, be like Goads to pierce into my " Mind! and let me rather feel, and smart, than die! " Let them be as Nails fastened in a sure Place (b): "That whatever Mytteries as yet unknown, or whatever Difficulties there be in Religion, if it be necessa-" ry, I may not finally neglect it; and that if it be exof pedient to attend immediately to it, I may no longer delay that Attendance! And, Oh let thy Grace teach " me the Lesson, I am so flow to learn; and conquer " that strong Opposition, which I feel in my Heart, " against the very Thought of it ! Hear these broken " Cries, for the Sake of Thy Son, who has taught and " faved many a Creature as untractable as I, and can out of Stones raise up Children to Abraham (c)! Amen."

(b) Eccl. xii. 11.

(c) Matt. iii. 9.

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CHAP. III.

The Awakened Sinner urged to immediate Confideration, and cautioned against Delay.

Sinners, when awakened, inclinable to dismiss Convictions for the present. §. 1. An immediate Regard to Religion urged. §. 2. (1.) From the Excellency and Pleasure of the Thing itself. §. 3. (2.) From the Uncertainty of that future Time on which Sinners presume, compared with the sad Consequences of being cut off in Sin. §. 4. (3.) From the Immutability of GOD's present Demands. §. 5. (4.) From the Tendency, which Delay has, to make a Compliance with these Demands more difficult than it is at present. §. 6. (5.) From the Danger of GOD's withdrawing his Spirit, compared with the dreadful Case of a Sinner given up by it: §. 7. Which probably is now the Case of many. §. 8. Since therefore, on the whole, whatever the Event he, Delays may prove Matter of Lamentation. §. 9. The Chapter concludes with an Exhortation against yielding to them: §. 10. And a Prayer against Temptations of that Kind.

I HOPE my last Address so far awakened the Convictions of my Reader, as to bring him to this Purpose. "That some Time or other he would at tend to Religious Considerations." But give me Leave to ask earnestly and punctually, "When that shall be?" Go thy Way for this Time, and at a more convenient Season I will fend for thee, was the Language, and the Ruin, of unhappy Felix (a) when he trembled under the Reasonings and Expostulations of the Apostle. The

Tempter presumed not to urge, That he should give up all Thoughts of Repentance and Reformation; but only that, considering the present Hurry of his Affairs (as no Doubt they were many,) he should defer it to a longer Day. The Artisce succeeded, and Felix was undone.

own Sake, and out of tender Compassion to your perishing immortal Soul, I would not willingly take up with such a Dismission, and Excuse. No, not the you shall fix a Time; the you shall determine on the next Year, or Month, or Week, or Day. I would turn upon you, with all the Eagerness and Tenderness of friendly Importunity, and intreat you to bring the Matter to an Issue even now. For if you say, "I will think on these "Things To-morrow," I shall have but little Hope; and shall conclude, That all that I have hitherto urged, and all that you have read, hath been offered and viewed in vain.

6. 3. WHEN I invited you to the Care and Practice of Religion, it may feem strange, that it should be necessary for me, affectionately to plead the Case with you, in order to your immediate Regard and Compliance. What I am inviting you to, is to noble and excellent in itself, so well worthy the Dignity of our Rational Nature, so suitable to it, so manly, and so wise, that one would imagine, you should take Fire, as it were, at the first hearing of it; yea, that so delightful a View should presently possess your whole Soul with a kind of Indignation against yourself, that you pursued it no sooner. " May I lift up mine Eyes and my Soul to Gop? " May I devote myself to Him? May I even now com-" mence a Friendship with Him? A Friendship, which 66 shall last for ever, the Security, the Delight, the "Glory of this immortal Nature of mine?" And shall I draw back and fay, " Nevertheless let me not com-" mence this Friendship too soon: Let me live at least " a few Weeks, or a few Days longer, without GOD " in the World." Surely it would be much more reafonable to return inward, and fay, "Oh my Soul, on " what vile Husks halt thou been feeding, while thine " Heavenly Father has been forsaken, and injured? Shall I defire to multiply the Days of my Poverty, " my

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"my Scandal, and my Misery?" On this Principle, surely an immediate Return to God should in all Reason be chosen; rather than to play the Fool any longer, and to go on a little more to displease God, and thereby to starve and to wound your own Soul; even the your Continuance in Life were ever so certain, and your Capacity to return to God and your Duty ever so entirely in your own Power, now, and in every suture

Moment, thro' Scores of Years yet to come.

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6. 4. But who, or what are You, that you should lay your account for Years, or for Months to come? What is your Life? Is it not even as a Vapour, that appeareth for a little Time, and then vanisheth away (b)? And what is your Security, or what is your peculiar Warrant, that you should thus depend upon the Certainty of its Continuance? and that so absolutely, as to venture, as it were, to pawn your Soul upon it? Why you will perhaps fay, "I am young, and in all my Bloom and Vi-" gour: I fee hundreds about me, who are more than " double my Age; and not a few of them, who feem to " think it too foon to attend to Religion yet."-You view the Living, and you talk thus. But I befeech you, think of the Dead. Return in your Thoughts, to those Graves in which you have left some of your young Companions, and your Friends. You faw them awhile ago gay and active; warm with Life, and Hopes, and Schemes. And some of them would have thought a Friend strangely importunate, that should have interrupted them in their Business, and their pleasures, with a solemn Lecture on Death and Eternity. Yet they were then on the very Borders of both. You have fince feen their Corpfes, or at least their Cossins; and probably carried about with you the Badges of Mourning, which you received at their Funerals. Those once vigorous, and perhaps beautiful Bodies of theirs, now lie mouldering in the Duft; as senseless, and helpless, as the most decrepid Pieces of Human Nature, which Fourscore Years ever brought down to it. And what is infinitely more to be regarded, their Souls, whether prepared for this great Change, or thoughtless of it, have made their appearance before God, and are at this Moment,

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Moment, fixed either in Heaven, or in Hell. Now let me seriously ask you, Would it be miraculous, or would it be ftrange, if such an Event should befall you? How are you fure, that some fatal Disease should not this Day begin to work in your Veins? How are you fure, that you shall ever be capable of reading or thinking any more, if you do not attend to what you now read, and pursue the Thought which is now offering itself to your Mind? This sudden Alteration may at least possibly happen; and if it does, it will be to you a terrible one indeed, To be thus surprised into the Presence of a forgotten Gon; to be torn away, at once, from a World, to which your whole Heart and Soul has been rivetted; a World, which has engroffed all your Thoughts, and Cares, all your Desires and Pursuits; and be fixed in a State, which you never could be so far persuaded to think of, as to spend so much as one Hour in serious Preparation for it: How must you even shudder at the Aprehension of it, and with what Horror must it fill you? It seems Matter of Wonder, that in such Circumstances, you are not almost distracted with the Thoughts of the Uncertainty of Life, and are not even ready to die for fear of Death. To trifle with God any longer, after fo folema an Admonition as this, would be a Circumstance of additional Provocation, which, after all the rest, might be fatal: Nor is there any Thing you can expect in such a Case, but that He should cut you off immediately, and teach other Thoughtless Creatures, by your Ruin, what a hazardous Experiment they make, when they act as you are acting.

§. 5. AND will you, after all, run this desperate Risque? For what imaginable Purpose can you do it? Do you think, the Business of Religion will become less necessary, or more easy by your Delay? You know, that it will not. You know that whatever the blessed God demands now, he will also demand Twenty or Thirty Years hence, if you should live to see the Time. God hath fixed this Method, in which he will pardon and accept Sinners, in his Gospel. And will he ever alter that Method? Or if He will not, can Men alter it? You like not to think of repenting, and humbling yourself before

before God, to receive Righteousness and Life from his free Grace in Christ; and you above all dislike the Thought of returning to God in the Ways of Holy Obedience. But will He ever dispense with any of these, and publish a new Gospel, with Promises of Life and Salvation to impenitent, unbelieving Sinners, if they will but call themselves Christians, and submit to a few external Rites? How long, do you think, you might wait for such a change in the Constitution of Things? You know Death will come upon you; and you cannot but know in your own Conscience, that a general dissolution will come upon the World, long before GOD can thus deny himself, and contradict all his Persections, and all his Declarations.

6, 6. Or if his Demands continue the same, as they affuredly will, do you think, any Thing, which is now difagreeable to you in them, will be less disagreeable hereafter, than it is at present? Shall you love to sm less, when it is become more habitual to you, and when Confcience is yet more enfeebled and debauched? If you are running with the Footmen and fainting, shall you be able to contend with the Horseman (c)? Surely you cannot imagine it. You would not fay, in any Diftemper which threatened your Life, "I will stay till I grow a little worfe, and then I "will apply to a Physician: I will let my Discase get a little "more Rooting in my Vitals, and then I will try what can be done to remove it." No, it is only where the Life of the Soul is concerned, that men think thus wildly : The Life and Health of the Body appear too precious, to be thus trifled away.

§. 7. Ir after such desperate Experiments you are ever recovered, it must be by an Operation of Divine Grace on your Soul, yet more powerful and more wonderful in Proportion to the increasing Inveteracy of your Spiritual Maladies. And can you expect, that the Holy Spirit should be more ready to assist you, in Consequence of your having so shamefully tristed with him and affronted him? He is now, in some Measure, moving on your Heart: If you seel any secret Relentings in it upon what you read, it is a Sign you are not yet utterly forsaken. But who can tell, whether these are not the last Touches he will ever give to a Heart so long hardened against

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him? Who can tell, but God may this Day swear in his Wrath that you shall not enter into his Rest (d) ? I have been telling you, that you may immediately die. You own it is possible, you may, And can you think of any Thing more terrible? Yes, Sinner, I will tell you of one Thing more dreadful than immediate Death and immediate Damnation. The Blessed God may say, . As " for that wretched Creature, who has fo long trifled with me, and provoked me, let him fill live: Let " him live in the midst of Prosperity and Plenty: Let "him live under the purest, and most powerful Ordi-" nances of the Gospel too; that he may abuse them, " to aggravate his Condemnation, and die under feven-" fold Guilt, and a fevenfold Curfe. I will not give him "the Grace to think of his Ways for one serious. " Moment more; but he shall go on from bad to worse, " filling up the Measure of his Iniquities, till Death and " Destruction seize him in an unexpected Hour, and " Wrath come upon bim to the uttermost (e)."

§. 8. You think this an uncommon Case; but I fear it is much otherwise. I fear there are few Congregations, where the Word of God has been faithfully preached, and where it has been long despised, especially by those whom it had once awakened, in which the Eye of God does not see a Number of such wretched Souls; tho' it is impossible for us to pronounce upon the case, who they are.

of, of Reader; whether he will immediately cut you off, or feal you up under final Hardness and Impenitency of Heart; or whether His Grace may, at length awaken you, to confider your Ways, and return to Him, even when your Heart is grown yet more obdurate than it is at present. For to his Almighty Grace nothing is hard, not even to transform a Rock of Marble into a Man and a Saint. But this I will confidently say, That if you delay any longer, the Time will come when you will bitterly repent of that Delay; and either lament it before God in the Anguish of your Heart here, or curse your own Folly and Madness in Hell; yea, when you will wish, that, dreadful as Hell is, you had rather fallen

Chap. 3. A Prayer against being tempted to Delay. 29.

nto it sooner, than have lived in the Midst of so many shused Mercies, to render the Degree of your Punishment more insupportable, and your Sense of it more

exquisitely tormenting.

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(i) P10v. vi. 4.

Name of our Lord Tefus Christ, and by the Worth, and, if I may so speak, by the Blood of your immortal and verishing Soul, that you delay not a Day, or an Hour, onger. Far from giving Sleep to your Eyes, or Slumber to your Eyelids (f) in the continued Neglect of this important Concern, take with you even now Words, and wern unto the LORD (g); and before you quit the Place where you now are, fall upon your Knees in his Sacred Presence, and pour out your Heart in such Language, or at least to some such Purpose, as this.

A PRAYER for one, who is tempted to delay applying to Religion, though under some Convidion of its Importance.

OH Thou Righteous and Holy Sovereign of Hea-" ven and Earth! Thou (iOD in whose Hand my Breath is, and whose are all my Ways (h)! I con-' fels, I have been far from glorifying Thee, or conducting myself according to the Intimations, or the Declarations of thy Will. I have therefore Reason to 'adore thy Forbearance and Goodness, that Thou hall not long fince stopped my Breath, and cut me off from the Land of the Living. I adore thy Patience, that I have not Months and Years ago, been an Inhabitant of Hell; where Ten Thousand delaying Sin-' ners are now lamenting their Folly, and will be lamenting it for ever. But, O God, how possible is it, that this triffing Heart of mine may, at length, betray me into the same Ruin! and then, alas, into a Ruin aggravated by all this Patience and Forbearance of Thine! I am convinced, that sooner or later Religion must be my serious Care, or I am undone. And yet my foolish Heart draws back from the Yoke: Yet I stretch myself upon the Bed of Sloth, and cryout for a little more Sleep, a little more Slumber, &

(g) Hof, xiv. 2. (h) Dan. v. 230

A Prayer for one under Convictions, Chap 3. " little more folding of the Hands to fleep (i). Thus does " my corrupt Heart plead for its own Indulgence, 2. e gainst the Conviction of my better Judgment. What " shall I say ? O Lord, Save me from myself! Save me " from the Artifices and Deceitfulness of Sin: Save me " from the Treachery of this perverse and degenerate " Nature of mine, and fix upon my Mind what I have " now been reading! " O Lord, I am not now instructed in Truths, which " were besore quite unknown. Often have I been " warned of the Uncertainty of Life, and of the greater "Uncertainty of the Day of Salvation: And I have " formed some light Purposes, and have begun to take a few irresolute Steps in my Way towards a Return to Thee. But, alas! I have been only, as it were, " fluttering about Religion, and have never fixed upon it. " All my Resolutions have been scattered like Smoke, or dispersed, like a cloudy Vapour before the Wind. "Oh that thou wouldst now bring these Things home to my Heart, with a more powerful Conviction than " it hath ever yet felt! Oh that Thou wouldst pursue me with them, even when I flee from them! If! " should ever grow mad enough to endeavour to escape them any more, may thy Spirit address me in the " Language of effectual Terror; and add all the most opowerful Methods, which Thou knowest to be ne-" ceffary, to awaken me from this Lethargy, which " must otherwise be mortal! May the Sound of these "Things be in mine Ears, when I go out, and when I come in, when I lie down, and when I rife up (k)! And if the Repote of the Night, and the Bufiness of the "Day, be for a while interrupted by the Impression, " be it so, O God! if I may but thereby carry on my " Business with Thee to better Purpose, and at length " secure a Repose in Thee, instead of all that Terror, " which I now find, when I think upon GOD, and am " troubled (1). " O LORD, my Flesh trembleth for Fear of Thee, and I " am ofraid of thy Judgments (m). I am afraid lest even now, that I have begun to think of Religion,

(k) Deut. vi. 7. (1) Pfal. lxxvii. 3.

(i) Prov vi. to.

(m) Pfal, cxix. 130.

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"Thou shouldst cut me off in this critical and import-" ant Moment, before my Thoughts grow to any " Ripeness; and blast in eternal Death, the first Bud-" dings and Openings of it in my Mind. But Oh Spare " me, I earnestly entreat Thee; for thy Mercies Sake, " spare me a little longer! It may be, thro' Thy Grace, " I shall return. It may be, if Thou continuest Thy " Patience towards me a while longer, there may be " fome better Fruit produced by this Cumberer of the " Ground (n). And may the remembrance of that long " Forbearance, which thou hast already exercised to-" wards me, prevent my continuing to trifle with Thee, " and with my own Soul! From this Day, O Lord, " from this Hour, from this Moment, may I be able to " date more lasting Impressions of Religion, than have ever yet been made upon my Heart by all that I have " ever read, or all that I have heard! Amen."

(n) Lukexiii. 7. 8.

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CHAP. IV.

The Sinner arraigned and Convicted.

Conviction of Guilt necessary. §. 1. A Charge of Rebellion against GOD advanced. §. 2. Where it is shown, (1). That all Men are born under GOD's Law. §. 3. (2). That no Man hath perfectly kept it. §. 4. An Appeal to the Reader's Conscience on this Head, that he hath not. §. 5. (3). That to have broken it, is an Evil inexpressibly great. §. 6. Illustrated by a more particular View of the Aggravations of this Gult, arising, [1.] From Knowledge. §. 7. [2] From Divine Favours received. §. 8. [3.] From Convictions of Conscience overborne. §. 9. [4.] From the Strivings of GOD's Spirit resisted. §. 10. [5.] From Vows and Resolutions broken. §. 11 The Charge summed up, and left upon the Sinner's Conscience. §. 12 The Sinner's Confesion under a general Conviction of Guilt.

SI am attempting to lead you to true Religion, and not merely to some superficial Form of it, I am sensible I can do it no otherwise, than in the Way of deep Humiliation. And therefore, supposing you are persuaded, thro' the Divine Biessing on what you have before read, to take it into Consideration, I would now endeavour, in the first Place, with all the Seriousness I can, to make you heartily sensible of you Guilt before Gop. For I well know, that unless you are convinced of this, and affected with the Conviction, all the Provisions of Gospel Grace will be slighted, and your Soul intallibly destroyed, in the Midst of the noblem Means appointed for its Recovery. I am sully persuaded that Thousands live and die in a Course of Sin, with

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Chap. 4. as having broken the Law of GOD. 33 out feeling upon their Hearts any Sense that they are Sinners; though they cannot for Shame, but own it in Words. And therefore let me deal faithfully with you, tho' I may seem to deal roughly; for Complaisance is not to give Law to Addresses in which the Life of your

Soul is concerned.

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S. 2. PERMIT me, therefore, O Sinner, to consider myself at this Time, as an Advocate of GOD; as one employed in his Name, to plead against thee, and to charge thee with nothing less, than being a Rebel and a Traitor, against the Sovereign Majesty of Heaven and Earth. However thou mayest be dignished or distinguished among Men; if the noblest Blood run in thy Veins; if thy seat were among Princes, and thine Arm were the Terror of the Mighty in the Land of the Living (a); it would be necessary, thou shouldst be told, and told plainly, Thou hast broken the Laws of the King of Kings, and by the Breach of it art become obnoxious to his righteous Condemnation.

§ 3. Your Conscience tells you, that you were born the natural Subject of God; born under the indispensible Obligations of his Law. For it is most apparent, that the Constitution of your Rational Nature, which makes you capable of reciving Law from God, binds you to obey it. And it is equally evident and certain, that you have not exactly obeyed this Law; nay, that you have violated it in many aggravated Instances.

§. 4. WILL you dare to deny this? Will you dare to affert your Innocence? Remember it must be a compleat Innocence: Yes, and a perfect Righteousness too; or it can stand you in no stead, farther than to prove, that, tho' a condemned Sinner, you are not quite so criminal as some others, and will not have quite so hot a Place in Hell as they. And when this is considered, will you plead Not Guilty to the Charge? Search the Records of your own Conscience; for God searcheth them: Ask it seriously, "Have you never in your Lives sinned against God?" Solomon declared, that in his Days, there was not a just Man upon Earth, who did Good, and sinned not (b): And the Apostle Paul, that all had sinned, and come short of the Glory of GOD (c); that both

1) Ezek. xxxii. 27. (b) Eccl. vii. 20. (c) Rom. iii. 23.

The many Inflances of his transgressing it. Chap. 4, both Jerus and Gentiles, (which you know, comprehended the whole Human Race,) were all under Sin (d). And can you pre end any imaginable Reason, to believe the World is grown so much better since their Days, that any should now plead their own Case as an Exception? Or will you, however, presume to arise, in the Face of the Omniscient Majesty of Heaven, and say, I am the Man?

6. 5. Supposing, as before, you have been free from those gross Acts of Immorality, which are so pernicious to Society, that they have generally been punishable by Human Laws; can you pretend, that you have not, in smaller Inflances, violated the Rules of Piety, of Temperance, and of Charity? Is there any one Person, who has intimately known you, that would not be able to testify, you had faid, or done something amis? Or if others could not convict you, would not your own Heart do it? Does it not prove you guilty of Pride, of Passion, of Senfuality; of an excessive Fondness for the World, and its Enjoyments; of murmuring, or at least of secretly repining, against Goo, under the strokes of his asflicting Providence; of mispending a great deal of your Time; of abusing the Gifts of God's Bounty, to vain, if not (in some Instances) to pernizious Purposes; of mocking him, when you have pretended to engage in his Worthip, drawing near to him with your Mouth, and your Lips, while your Heart has been far from him (c)? Does not Conscience condemn you of some one Breach of the Law at least? And by one Breach of it, you are in a Sense, a Scriptural Sense, become guilty of all (f); and are as incapable of being justified before Gon by any obedience of your own, as if you had committed Ten Thousand Offences. But, in Reality, there are √ Ten Thousand, and more, chargeable to your Account. When you come to reflect on all your Sins of Negligence, as well as on those of Commission; on all the Inflances, in which you have failed to do Good, when it was in the Power of your Hand to do it (g); on all the Instances, in which Acts of Devotion have been omitted, especially in Secret; and on all those Cases in which

(a) Prov. iii. 27,

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⁽d) Rom. iii. 9. (e) Ifai. xxix. 13. (f) Jam. ii. 10.

you have shewn a stupid Disregard to the Honour of God, and to the Temporal and Eternal Happiness of your Fellow-Creatures: When all these, I say, are reviewed, the Number will swell beyond all Possibility of Account, and force you to cry out, Mine Iniquities are more than the Hairs of my Head (h). They will appear in such a Light before you, that your own Heart will charge you with countless Multitudes: and how much more then that GOD, who is greater than your Heart, and

knoweth all things (i).

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6. 6. And fay, Sinner, Is it a little Thing, that you have presumed to set light by the Authority of the Goo of Heaven, and to violate his Law, if it had been by mere Careleffness and Inattention? How much more heinous, therefore, is the Guilt, when in fo many Instances you have done it knowingly, and wilfully? Give me Leave feriously to ask you, and let me intreat you to ask your own Soul, Against whom hast thou magnified thyfelf? Against whom hast thou exalted thy Voice (k), or lifted up thy rebellious Hand? On whose Law, Oh Sinner, hast thou presumed to trample? and whose Friendship, and whose Enmity hast thou thereby dared to affront? Is it a Man like thyfelf, that thou halt infulted? Is it only a Temporal Monarch? Only one, who can kill thy Body, and then bath no more that he can do (1)? Nay, Sinner, thou wouldst not have dared to treat a Temporal Prince, as thou hast treated the King Eternal, Immortal, and Invisible (m). No Price could have hired thee, to deal by the Majesty of an Earthly Sovereign, as thou hast dealt by that GOD, before whom the Cheruhim and Seraphim are continually bowing. Not one opposing or complaining, disputing or murmuring Word is heard among all the Celestial Legions, when the Intimations of his Will are published to them. And who art thou, Oh wretched Man? auho art thou, that thou shouldst oppose Him? That thou shouldst oppose and provoke a GOD of infinite Power and Terror, who needs but exert one fingle Act of his Sovereign Will, and thou art in a Moment stripped of every possession; cut off from every Hope; destroyed and rooted up from Existence,

(h) Pfal. xl. 12. (i) 1 John iii, 20. (k) 2 Kings xix. 22 (l) Luke xii. 4. (m) 1 Tim. i. 17. Charge if you can.

§. 7. IF Knowledge be an Aggravation of Guilt, thy Guilt, O Sinner, is greatly aggravated! For thou waft born in Emanuel's Land, and God hath written to thee the great Things of his Law, yet thou hast accounted them as a firange Thing (n). Thou hast known to do Good and bast not done it (0); and therefore to thee the Omission of it has been Sin indeed. Haft thou not known? Haft thou not heard (p)? Wast thou not early taught the Will of God, in thine Infant Years? Hast thou not fince received repeated Lessons, by which it has been inculcated again and again, in public and in private, by preaching and reading the Word of God? Nay, bath not thy Duty been in some Inflances so plain, that even without any Instruction at all, thine own Reason. might eafily have inferred it? And hast thou not also been warned of the Consequences of Disobedience? Haft thou not known the righteous Judgment of GOD, that they who commit such Things are worthy of Death (q)? Yet thou haft, perhaps, not only done the same, but haft taken Pleasure in toose that do them; hast chosen them for thy most intimate Friends and Companions; so as thereby to frengthen by the Force of Example and Converse, the Hands of each other in your Iniquities.

§. 8. Nay more, If Divine Love and Mercy be any Aggravation of the Sins committed against it, thy Crimes, O Sinner, are heinously aggravated. Must

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⁽n) H f. viii. 12. (o) Jam. iv. 17. (p) Isai. xl. 18. (q) Rom. 1. 22.

^() If (u) P

thou not acknowledge it, O foolish Creature and unwife? Haft thou not been nourished and brought up by bim as his Child, and yet haft rebelled against him (r)? Did not God take you out of the Womb (s)? Did he not watch over you in your Infant Days, and guard you from a Multitude of Dangers, which the most careful Parent or Nurse could not have observed, or warded off? Has he not given you your Rational Powers? And is it not by Him you have been favoured with every Opportunity of improving them? Has he not every Day supplied your Wants, with an unwearied Liberality; and added, with Respect to many who will read this, the Delicacies of Life to its necessary Supports? Has he not heard your Cry, ruben Trouble came upon you (t); and frequently appeared for your Deliverance, when in the Diffresses of Nature you have called upon him for Help? Has he not rescued you from Ruin, when it seemed just ready to fivallow you up; and healed your Difeases, when it feemed to all about you, that the Residue of your Days was cut off in the Midst (u)? Or, if it had not been fo, is not this long continued and uninterrupted Health, which you have enjoyed for so many Years, to be acknowledged as an equivalent Obligation? Look round upon all your Possessions, and say, What one Thing have you in the World, which his Goodness did not give you, and which it hath not thus far preserved to you? Add to all this, the kind Notices of his Will, which he hath fent you; the tender Expostulations which he hath used with you, to bring you to a wifer and better Temper; and the Discoveries and gracious Invitations of his Gospel, which you have heard, and which you have despited: And then fay, whether your Rebellion has not been aggravated by the vilest Ingratitude, and whether that A Aggravation can be accounted finall?

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9. 9. AGAIN, If it be any Aggravation of Sin to be committed against Conscience, thy Crimes, O Sinner, have been so aggravated. Consult the Records of it; and then dispute the Fact, if you can. There is a Spirit in Man, and the Inspiration of the Amighty giveth him Understanding (w); and that Understanding will act, and

a fecret () Ifai. i. 2. (s) Pfal xxii. 9. (t) Job xxvii. 9. (u) Plal. cii. 24. Ifai. xxxviii. 10. (w) Job xxxII. 8.

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a fecret Conviction of being accountable to its Maker and Preferver, is inseparable from the Actings of it. It is easy to object to Human Remonstrances, and to give Things false Colourings before men; but the Heart of. ten condemns, while the Tongue excuses. Have you not often found it so? Has not Conscience remonstrated against your past Conduct, and have not these Remon. strances been very painful too? I have been assured bya Gentleman of undoubted Credit, that when he was in. the Pursuit of all the gayest Sensualities of Life, and was reckoned one of the happiest of Mankind, he has seen a Dog come into the Room where he was among his merry Companions, and has groaned inwardly, and faid, "Oh " that I had been that dog!" And hast thou, Sinner, felt nothing like this? Has thy Conscience been so flupified, so feared with a hot Iron (x), that it has never cried out of any of the Violences which have been done it? Has it never warned thee of the fatal Consequences of what thou hast done in Opposition to it? These Warnings are, in Effect, the Voice of GOD; they are the Admonitions which he gave thee by his Vicegerent in thy Breast. And when bis Sentence for thy Evil Works is extcuted upon thee in everlatting Death, thou shalt hear that voice speaking to thee again, in a louder Tone, and feverer Accent than before: And thou shall be tormented with its Upbraidings through Eternity, because

thou wouldst not, in Time, hearken to its Admonition. 6. 10. LET me add further, If it be any Aggravation, that Sin has been committed after GOD has been moving by his Spirit on the Mind, furely your Sin has been attended with that Aggravation too. Under the Mosaic Dispensation, dark and impersect as it was, the Spirit prove with the Jews; else Stephen could not have charged it upon them, that through all their Generations, they had always refisted him (y). Now furely we may much more reasonably apprehend, that he strives with Sinners under the Gospel. And have you never experienced any Thing of this Kind, even when there has been no external Circumstance to awaken you, nor any pious Teacher near you? Have you never perceived some secret Impulse upon your Mind, leading you to

Chap. 4. think of Religion, urging you to an immediate Confideration of it, sweetly inviting you to make Trial of it, and warning you that you would lament this stupid Neglect? O Sinner, why were not these happy Motions attended to? Why did you not as it were, spread out all the Sails of your Soul, to catch that Heavenly, that favourable Breeze? But you have carelessly neglected it: You have overborne these kind Influences: How reasonably then might the Sentence have gone forth in righteous Displeasure, My Spirit shall no more strive (z). And indeed, who can fay, that it is not already gone forth? If you feel no fecret Agitation of Mind, no Remorfe, no Awakening, while you read fuch a Remonstrance as this, there will be Room, great Room to suspect it.

6. 11. THERE is indeed one Aggravation more, which may not attend your Guilt; I mean, that of being committed against solemn Covenant Engagements: A Circumstance which has lain heavy on the Consciences of many, who, perhaps in the main Series of their Lives, have ferved God with great Integrity. But let me call you to think, To what is this owing? Is it not, that you have never personally made any solemn Profession of devoting yourfelf to God at all? have never done any Thing, which has appeared to your own Apprehension an Action by which you made a Covenant with Him; tho' you have heard so much of his Covenant, tho' you have been so solemnly and so tenderly invited into it? And in this View, how monstrous must this Circumstance appear, which at first was mentioned as some Alleviation of Guilt? Yet I must add, that you are not perhaps altogether so free from Guilt on this Head, as you may at first imagine. I will not infist on the Cavenant, which your Parents made in your Name, when they devoted you to God in Baptism; tho' it is really a weighty Matter, and by calling yourfelf a Christian you have professed to own and avow what they then did. But I would remind you, of what may have been more personal and express. Has your Heart been, even from your Youth, hardened to so uncommon a Degree, that you have never cried to GoD in any Season of Danger and Difficulty? And did you never mingle Vows with 6

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to nk those Cries? Did you never promise, that if God would hear and help you in that Hour of Extremity, you would forsake your Sins, and serve him as long as you lived? He heard and helped you, or you had not been reading these Lines; and, by such Deliverance, did, as it were, bind down your Vows upon you; and therefore your Guilt in the Violation of them remains before Him, tho' you are stupid enough to forget them. Nothing is forgotten, nothing is overlooked by Him; and the Day will come, when the Record shall be laid before you too.

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6. 12. And now, O Sinner, think seriously with thyfelf, what Defence thou wilt make to all this! Prepare thine Apology; call thy Witnesses; make thine Appeal from Him whom thou hast thus offended, to some superior Judge, if such there be. Alas, those Apologies are so weak and vain, that one of thy Fellow-Worms may easily detect and confound them; as I will endeavour presently to shew thee. But thy foreboding Conscience already knows the Issue. Thou art convided; convicted of the most aggravated Offences. Thou hast not humbled thine Heart, but lifted up thyself against the LORD of Heaven (a); and thy Sentence shall come forth from his Presence (b). Thou hast violated his known Law; thou halt despised and abused his numberless Mercies; thou hast affronted Conscience, his Vicegerent in thy Soul; thou hast refisted and grieved his Spirit; thou hast trifled with him in all thy pretended Submissions; and in one Word, and that his own, thou bast done Evil Things as thou coulds (c). Thousands are, no doubt, already in Hell, whose Guilt never equalled thine; and 'tis aftonishing, that God has spared thee to read this Representation of thy Cafe, or to make any Paule upon it. Oh walle not so precious a Moment, but enter, as attentively, and as humbly as thou canft, into those Reflections, which suit a Case so lamentable, and so terrible as thine!

⁽a) Dan. v. 22, 23. (b) Pfal. xvii. 2. (c) Jer. iii. 5.

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The Confession of a Sinner, convinced in general of his Guilt.

GOD! Thou injured Sovereign, Thou all pene-"trating and almighty Judge! What shall I say, " to this Charge? Shall I pretend, I am wronged by " it, and stand on the Defence in thy Presence? I dare " not do it; for Thou knowest my Foolishness, and none of " my Sins are bid from Thee (d). My Conscience tells " me, that a Denial of my Crimes would only increase " them, and add new Fuel to the Fire of thy deserved " Wrath. If I justify myself, mine own Mouth will con-" demn me; if I say, I am perfect, it will also prove me or perverse (e). For innumerable Evils have compassed me " about : Mine Iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that " I am not able to look up: They are, as I have been " told in thy Name, more than the Hairs of my Head, " and therefore my Heart faileth me (f). I am more " guilty, than is possible for another to declare or re-" present. My Heart speaks more than any other Ac-" cuser. And thou, O LORD, art much greater than " my Heart, and knowest all Things (g).

" WHAT has my Life been but a Course of Rebellion " against Thee? It is not this or that particular Ac-" tion alone, I have to lament. Nothing has been " right in its Principles, and Views, and Ends. My " whole Soul has been difordered. All my Thoughts, " my Affections, my Desires, my Pursuits, have been " wretchedly alienated from Thee. I have acted, as if " I had hated Thee, who art infinitely the loveliest of " all Beings; as if I had been contriving, how I might " tempt Thee to the uttermost, and wear out Thy Pa-" tience, marvellous as it is. My Actions have been " evil; my Words yet more evil than they; and, O " Bleffed God, my Heart, how much more corrupt than " either! What an inexhausted Fountain of Sin; has " there been in it? A Fountain of Original Corruption, " which mingled its bitter Streams with the Days of

" early Childhood; and which, alas, flows on even to

⁽d) Pfal. lxix. 5. (e) Job ix. 20. (f) Pfal. xl. 12. (g) 1 John iii. 20.

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"this Day, beyond what Actions or Words could ex"press. I see this to have been the Case, with Regard
"to what I can particularly survey. But Oh, how many
"Month, and Years, have I forgotten? concerning
"which I only know this, in the general, that they are
"much like those I can remember; except it be, that
"I have been growing worse and worse, and provoking

" I have been growing worse and worse, and provoking "Thy Patience more and more, tho' every new Exer-" cife of it was more and more wonderful. "And how am I affonished, that thy Forbearance " is still continued! It is, because Thou art GOD, and " not Man (h). Had I, a finful Worm, been thus in-" jured, I could not have endured it. Had I been a " Prince, I had long fince done Justice on any Rebel, " whose Crimes had borne but a di ant Resemblance " to mine. Had I been a Parent, I had long fince cast " off the ungrateful Child, who had made me such a " Return as I have all my Life long been making to " Thee, O Thou Father of my Spirit! The Flame of " natural Affection would have been extinguished; and " his Sight, and his very Name, would have become " hateful to me. Why then, O LORD, am I not caft " out from thy Presence (i)? Why am I not sealed up " under an irreversible Sentence of Destruction! That " I live, I owe to thine Indulgence. But Oh, if there " be yet any Way of Deliverance, if there be yet any " Hope for fo guilty a Creature, may it be opened upon " me by Thy Gospel and Thy Grace! And if any " farther Alarm, Humiliation, and Terror, be necessary " to my Security and Salvation, may I meet them, and " bear them all ! Wound mine Heart, O LORD, fo that "Thou wilt but afterwards heal it; and break it in " Pieces, if Thou wilt but at length condescend to " bind it up. (k) !"

(h) Hof. xi. 9. (i) Jer. lii. 2. (k) Hof. vi. 1.

CHAP. V.

The Sinner stripped of his vain Pleas.

The Vanity of those Pleas, which Sinners may secretly confide in so apparent, that they will be assamed at last to mention them before GOD. §. 1, 2. Such as, (1). That they descended from pious Parents. §. 3. (2.) That they had attended to the Speculative Part of Religion. §. 4. (3.) That they had entertained sound Notions. §. 5. (4.) That they had expressed a zealous Regard to Religion, and attended the outward Forms of Worship with those they apprehended the purest Churches. §. 6. 7. (5.) That they had been free from gross Immoralities. §. 8. (6.) That they did not think the Consequence of neglecting Religion would have been so fatal. §. 9. (7.) That they could not do otherwise than they did. §. 10. Conclusion §. 11. With the Meditation of a convinced Sinner, giving up his vain Pleas before GOD.

Y last Discourse lest the Sinner in a very a-I larming, and a very pitiable Circumstance, a Criminal convicted at the Bar of God, disarmed of all Pretences to perfect Innocence and finless Obedience, and confequently obnoxious to the Sentence of a holy Law, which can make no Allowance for any Transgression, no, not for the least; but pronounces Death, and a Curse, against every act of Disobedience: How much more then against those numberless and aggravated Acts of Rebellion, of which, O Sinner, thy Confcience hath condemned thee before Goo? I would hope, some of my Readers will ingenuously fall under the Conviction, and not think of making any Apology : For fure I am, that humbly to plead Guilty at the Divine Bar, is the most decent, and, all Things confidered, the most prudent Thing that can be done in such an unhappy Circumstance. Yet I know the Treachery, and the Self-flattery, of a finful and corrupted Heart. I know what Excuses it makes, and how, when it is driven from one Refuge, it flies to another,

The Plea of a Descent from Pious Parents, Chap. 5. another, to fortify itself against Conviction, and to perfuade, not merely another, but itself, " That if it " has been in some Instances to blame, it is not quite-" fo criminal as was represented: That there are at least " Confiderations that plead in its Favour, which, if they " cannot justify, will in some Degree excuse." A secret Reserve of this Kind, sometimes perhaps scarce formed into a diffinct Reflection, breaks the Force of Conviction, and often prevents that deep Humiliation before God, which is the happiest Token of approaching Deliverance. I will therefore examine into some of these Particulars; and for that Purpole would feriously ask thee, O Sinner, What thou half to offer in Arrest of Judgment? What Plea thou canst urge for thy Self, why the Sentence of GOD should not go forth against thee, and why thou shouldst not fall into the Hands of his Justice?

§. 2. Bur this I must premise, that the Question is not, How thou wouldst answer to me, a weak finful Worm like thyself, who am shortly to stand with thee at the same Bar: (The LORD grant that I may find Mercy of the LORD in that Day (a)!) But, what wilt thou reply to thy Judge? What couldit thou plead, if thou wast now actually before his Tribunal; where, to multiply vain Words, and to frame idle Apologies, would be but to increase thy Guilt and Provocation? Surely the very Thought of his Presence must superfede a Thousand of those trifling Excuses, which now sometimes impose on a Generation that are pure in their own Eyes, tho' they are not washed from their Filthiness (b): Or while they are conscious of their own Impurities, trust in Words that cannot prefit (c), and lean upon broken Reeds (d).

§. 3. You will not, to be sure, in such a Circumstance plead "that you are descended from pious Pa-" rents." That was indeed your Privilege : and Woe be to you, that you have abused it, and forfaken the GOD of your Fathers (e). Ishmael was immediately descended from Abraham the Friend of GOD; and Efau was the Sun of Isaac, who was born according to the Promise: Yet you know they were both cut off f om the Blefling, to which they apprehended they had a K nd of hereditary Caim.

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⁽a) 2 Tim. i. 18.

⁽b) Prov. XXX. 12.

⁽c) Jer, vii, 8,

⁽d) Ila, xxxvi. 6. (e) 2 Chron, vii. 22.

Chap. 5. or of an orthodox Judgment, will not avail. 45 Claim. You may remember that our LORD does not only speak of one who could call Abraham Father, who was tormented in Flames (f); but expressly declares, that many of the Children of the Kingdom Shall be Shut out of it; and when others come from the most distant Parts to st down in it, shall be distinguished from their Companions in Misery, only by louder Accents of Lamentation, and

more furious gnashing of Teeth (g).

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6. 4. Now will you then prefume to plead, "that you " had exercised your Thoughts about the speculative " Part of Religion." For to what End can this ferve, but to increase your Condemnation! Since you have broken God's Law, fince you have contradicted the most obvious and apparent Obligations of Religion, to have enquired into it, and argued upon it, is a Circumstance that proves your Guilt more audacious. What? did you think Religion was merely an Exercise of Men's Wit, and the Amusement of their Curiofity? If you argued about it, on the Principles of common Sense, you must have judged and proved it to be a practical Thing: And if it was fo, why did you not practife accordingly? You knew the particular Branches of it: And why then did you not attend to every one of them? To have pleaded an unavoidable Ignorance, would have been the happiest Plea that could have remained for you: Nay, an actual, tho' faulty Ignorance, would have been some little Allay of your Guilt. But if, by your own Confession, you have known your Master's Will, and bave not done it, you bear Witness against yourself, that you deserve to be beaten with many Stripes (h .

§ 5. Nor yet again will it suffice to say, "that " you have had right Notions, both of the Doctrines "and the Precepts of Religion." Your Advantage for practifing it was therefore the greater: But understand. ing, and acting right, can never go for the same Thing, in the Judgment of God, or of Man. In believing there is one GOD, you have done well; but the Devils also believe and tremble (i). In acknowledging Christ to be the Son of GOD, and the Holy One, you have done well too; but you know the unclean Spirits made this

very f) Luke xvi. 24: (g) Matt. viii. 11, 12. (h) Luke xii. 47. (1) Jam. 11. 19.

§. 6. Bur perhaps you may think of pleading that " you have actually done something in Religion." Having judged what Faith was the foundest, and what Worship the purest. " You entered yourself into those " Societies, where such Articles of Faith were professed, " and fuch Forms of Worship were practised; and " among those you have fignalized yourselves, by the " Exactness of your Attendance, by the Zeal with " which you have espoused their Cause, and by the Earnefiness with which you have contended for such " Principles and Practices."-O Sinner, I much fear that this Zeal of thine, about the Circumstantials of Religion, will swell thine Account, rather than be allowed in Abatement of it. He that fearches thine Heart, knows from whence it arose, and how far it extended. Perhaps, He fees that it was all Hypocrify; an artful Veil, under which thou wast carrying on thy mean Designs for this World; while the sacred Names of God and Religion were profaned and proflicuted in the basest Manner: And if so, thou art cursed with a distinguished Curse, for so daring an Insult on the Divine Omniscience, as well as Justice. Or perhaps the Earnestness, with which you have been contending for the Faith and Worship, which was once delivered to the Saints (m), or which, 'is possible, you may have rashly concluded to be that, might be mere Pride and Bitterness of Spirit: And all the Zeal you have expressed might possibly arise from a Confidence of your own Judgment, from an Impatience of Contradiction, or some secret Malignity of Spirit which delighted itself in condemning, and even in worrying others; yea, which (if I may be allowed the Expression,) fiercely preyed upon Religion, as the Tyger upon the Lamb, to turn it into a Nature most contrary to its own. And shall this screen you becore the great Tribungl? Shall it not rather awaken the Displeasure, it is pleaded to avert?

§. 7. Bur (m) Jude, ver. 3

(k) Like iv. 34. 41. (1) Jude, ver. 6. nor

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Chap. 5. or to urge the Works you have done.

6. 7. Bur say, that this Zeal for Notions and Forms has been ever fo well intended, and fo far as it has gone, ever so well conducted too; what will that avail towards vindicating thee in fo many Inflances of Negligence and Disobedience, as are recorded against thee in the Book of GOD's Remembrance? Were the Revealed Doctrines of the Gospel to be earnestly maintained, (as indeed they onght;) and was the great practical Purpose for which they were revealed to be forgot? Was the very Mint and Anife, and Cummin-to be tithed, and were the weightier Matters of the Law to be omitted (n); even that Love to GOD, which is its first and great Command (o)? Oh how wilt thou be able to vindicate even the justest Sentence thou hast passed on others for their Infidelity, or for their Disobedience, without being condemned out of thine

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6. 8. WILL you then plead, " your fair moral Cha-" rader, your Works of Righteousness and of Mercy ?" Had your obedience to the Law of God been compleat, the Plea might be allowed, as important and valid. I have supposed and proved above, that Conscience testifies to the contrary; and you will not now dare to contradict it. I add farther, Had these Works of yours, which you now urge, proceeded from a fincere Love to GoD, and a genuine Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you would not have thought of pleading them, any otherwise than as an Evidence of your Interest in the Gospel Covenant, and in the Bleffings of it, procured by the Rightcoufness and Blood of the Redeemer : And that Faith, had it been fincere, would have been attended with fuch deep Humility, and with fuch folemn Apprehensions of the Divine Holine's and Glory, that instead of pleading any Works of your own before God, you would rather have implored his Pardon, for the Mixture of finful Imperfection attending the very best of them. Now, as you are a Stranger to this humbling and fanctifying Principle, (which here, in this Address, I suppose my Reader to be,) it is absolutely necessary you should be plainly and faithfully told, that neither Sobriety, nor Honesty nor Humanity, will justify you before the Tribunal of God, when he lays Judgment to the Line, and Righteousness

⁽¹⁾ Matt. xxiii. 23. (0) Matt. xxii. 28. (p) Luke xix. 22.

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to the Plummet (q), and examines all your Actions, and all your Thoughts, with the strictest Severity. You have not been a Drunkard, an Adulterer, or a Robber, So far it is well. You fland before a righteous Gon, who will do you ample Justice; and therefore will not condemn you for Drunkenness, Adultery, or Robbery. But you have forgotten bim, your Parent and your Benefactor; you have cast off Fear and restrained Prayer before him (r); you have despited the Blood of his Son, and all the immortal Bleffings that he purchased with it. For this therefore are you judged, and condemned. And as for any Thing that has looked like Virtue, and Humanity in your Temper and Conduct, the Exercise of it has in a great Measure been its own Reward, if there were any Thing more than Form and Artifice in it; and the various Bounties of Divine Providence to you amidst all the numberless Provocations, have been a thousand Times more than an Equivalent for such desective and imperfect Virtues as these. You remain therefore chargeable with the Guilt of a Thousand Offences, for which you have no Excuse; tho' there are some other Instances, in which you did not grossly offend. And those good Works, in which you have been fo ready to trust, will no more vindicate you in his awful Presence, than a Man's kindness to his poor Neighbours would be allowed as a Plea in Airest of Judgment, when he Rood convicted of High Treason against his Prince.

§. 9. Bur you will, perhaps, be ready to say, "You "did not expect all this: You did not think the Conse"quences of neglecting Religion would have been so "fatal." And why did you not think it? Why did you not examine more attentively, and more impartially? Why did you suffer the Pride and Folly of your vain. Heart, to take up with such superficial Appearances, and trust the light Suggestions of your own prejudiced Mind, against the express Declaration of the Word of GOD? Had you reflected on his Character, as the Supreme Governor of the World, you would have seen the Necessity of such a Day of Retribution, as we are now referring to. Had you regarded the Scripture, the Divine Au-

hority

ricy of which you professed to believe, every Page might have taught you to expect it. "You did not think of "Religion!" And of what were you thinking, when you forgot, or neglected it ? Had you too much Employment of another Kind? Of what Kind, I befeech you? What End could you propose by any thing else, of equal Moment? Nay, with all your Engagements, Conscience will tell you, that there have been Seasons, when for want of Thought, Time and Life have been a Burthen to you: Yet you guarded against Thought as an Enemy, and cast up (as it were) an Intrenchment of Inconfideration around you on every Side, as if it had been to defend you from the most dangerous Invasion. God knew you were thoughtless; and therefore he sent you Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept (s), in such plain Language, that it needed no Genius or Study to underfland it. He tried you too with Afflictions, as well as with Mercies, to awaken you out of your fatal Lethargy; And yet, when awakened, you would lie down again upon the Bed of Sloth. And now, pleasing as your Dreams might be, you must lie down in Sorrow (t). Reflection has at last overtaken you, and must be heard as a Tormentor, fince it might not be heard as a Friend.

§. 10. But some may perhaps imagine, that one imfortant Apology is yet unheard, and that there may be Room to fay, " You were by the Necessity of your Nature, "impelled to those things, which are now charged "upon you as Crimes; whereas it was not in your " Power to have avoided them, in the Circumstances in "which you are placed." If his will do any Thing, it indeed promifes to do much; fo much, that it will amount to nothing. If I were disposed to answer you upon the Folly and Madness of your own Principles, I. might fay, that the Same Consideration, which proves it was necessary, for you to offend, proves also that it is netessary for God to punish you; and that, indeed, He cannot but do it: And I might farther fay, with an excellent Writer of our own Age*, "That the same Principles "which destroy the Injustice of Sins, destroy the In-" justice of Punishment too." But if you cannot admit this,

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⁽s) Isai. xxviii. 10. (t) Isai. l. 11. Ep. of Briftol's Analogy, &c. Page 135. Octavo Edit.

In vain to fay you could not do otherwise. this, if you should still reply in spite of Principle, that it must be unjust to punish you for an Action utterly and abfolutely unavoidable; I really think you would answer right. But in that answer you will contradict your own Scheme, (as I observed above;) and I leave your Conscience to judge, what fort of a Scheme that must be, which would make all kind of Punishment unjust : For the Argument will on the whole be the same, whether with Regard to Human Punifoment or Divine. 'Tis a Scheme full of Confusion and Horror. You would not, I am fure, take it from a Servant who had robbed you, and then fired your House: You would never inwardly believe, that he could not have helped it: or think that he had fairly excused himself by such a Plea. And I am persuaded, you would be so far from presuming to offer it to God at the great Day, that you would not venture to turn it into a Prayer even now. Imagine, that you saw a Malefactor dying, with such Words as these in his Mouth: " O Gop, it is true, I did indeed " rob and murder my Fellow-Creatures; but Thou knowest, that, as my Circumstances were ordered, I " could not do otherwise: My Will was irresistibly determined by the Motives which Thou didft fet before " me; and I could as well have shaken the Foundations " of the Earth, or darkened the Sun in the Firmament, " as have refifted the Impulse which bore me on." I put it to your Conscience, whether you would not look on fuch a Speech as this with Detestation, as one Enormity added to another. Yet if the Excuse would have any Weight in your Mouth, it would have equal Weight in bis; or would be equally applicable to any the most shocking Occasion. But indeed it is so contrary to the plainest Principles of common Reason, that I can hardly persuade myself, any one could seriously and thoroughly believe it; and should imagine my Time very ill employed here, if I were to fet myfelf to combat those Pretences to Argument, by which the Wantonness of Human Wit has attempted to varnish it over.

g. 11. You fee then, on the whole, the Vanity of all your Pleas, and how easily the most plausible of them might be silenced, by a mortal Man, like yourself: How much more then by Him, who fearches all Hearts, and

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Chap. 5. The Meditation of one giving up his Pleas. 51 can in a Moment, flash in upon the Conscience a most powerful and irrefistible Conviction? What then can you do, while you fland convicted in the Presence of Goo! What should you do, but hold your Peace under an inward Sense of your inexcusable Guilt, and prepare yourfelf to hear the Sentence which his Law pronounces against you? You must feel the Execution of it, if the Gospel does not at length deliver you; and you must feel something of the Terror of it, before you can be excited to feek to that Gospel for Deliverance.

The MEDITATION of a Convinced Sinner, giving up bis vain Pleas before GOD.

EPLORABLE Condition, to which I am indeed "reduced! I have finned; and what shall I fay " unto Thee, O thou Preserver of Men (u)? What shall " I dare to fay? Feol that I was, to amuse myself with " fuch trifling Excuses as these, and to imagine, they " could have any Weight in Thy tremendous Presence; " or that I should be able so much as to mention them " there! I cannot presume to do it. I am filent and " confounded. My Hopes, alas, are slain; and my " Soul itself is ready to die too; so far as an Immortal " Soul can die: And I am almost ready to say, O that " it could die entirely! I am indeed a Criminal in the " Hand of Justice, quite disarmed, and stripped of the "Weapons in which I trusted. Dissimulation can only " add Provocation to Provocation. I will therefore " plainly and freely own it. I have acted, as if I thought "God was altogether such a one as myself: But He hath " faid, I will reprove thee; I will fet thy Sins in Order " before thine Eyes (x), will marshall them in Battle " Array. And Oh, what a terrible Kind of Host do " they appear? and how do they furround me beyond " all Possibility of an Escape! Oh my Soul, they have, " as it were, taken thee Prisoner; and they are bearing " thee away to the Divine Tribunal. all

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" THOU must appear before it! Thou must fee the " awful Eternal Judge, who tries the very reins (y); and who needs no other Evidence, for He has bimfelf been

(y) Jer. xvu. 10. (u) Job vii. 30. (x) Pfal. 1. 21.

The Meditation of one giving up his Pleas Chap. 5. " Witness (z) to all thy Rebellion. Thou must fee " Him, O my Soul, fitting in Judgment upon thee: " And when he is friet to mark Iniquity (a), how wilt "thou answer bim for one of a Ibousand (b)! And if thou canst not answer Him, in what Language will " He Speak to thee! LORD, as Things at present stand, I " can expect no other Language than that of Condem. " nation. And what a Condemnation it is ! Let me re-" flect upon it! Let me read my Sentence before I hear " it finally and irreverfibly past! I know, He has re-" corded in His Word; and I know in the general, " that the Representation is made with a gracious De-" fign. I know, that he would have us alarmed, that " we may not be destroyed. Speak to me, therefore, O "Gop, while Thou speakest not for the last Time, and " in Circumstances when Thou wilt hear me no more. " Speak in the Language of effectual Terror, fo that it " be not to speak me into final Despair. And let Thy " Word, however painful in its Operation, be quick and " powerful, and sharper than any two edged Sword (c). " Let me not vainly flatter myself : Let me not be left " a wretched Prey to those who would prophely smooth " Things to me (d), till I am fealed up under Wrath, " and feel thy Justice piercing my Soul, and the Poison " of Thine Arrows drinking up all my Spirits (e). " Before I enter upon the particular View, I know in the general, that it is a terrible I bing to fall into the " Hands of the Living GOD (f). O Thou living GoD, " in one Sense I am already fallen into Thine Hands. I " am become obnoxious to thy Displeasure, justiy ob-" noxious to it: and whatever Thy Sentence may be " when it comes forth from thy Prefence (g), I must con-" demn myfelf, and justify Thee. Thou canst not treat " me with more Severity, than mine Iniquities have de-" ferred: And how bitter soever that Cup of Trembling

(z) Jer. xxix. 23. (c) Heb. iv. 12.

" the very Dregs of it (1)."

(i) Heb. x. 31. (i) Pfal. txxv. 8. (a) Pfal. cxxx. 3. (d) Ifai. xxx. 10.

(g) Pfal. xvii. 2.

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(b) Job ix 3.

(h) Itai. h. 17.

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CHAP. VI.

The Sinner Sentenced.

The Sinner called upon to bear his Sentence, §. 1, 2. GOD's Law does now in general pronounce a Curse: § 3. It pronounces Death. §. 4. And being turned into Hell. §. 5. The Judgment-Day shall come. §. 6. The Solemnity of that grand Process described, according to Scriptural Representations of it. §. 7, 8. With a particular Illustration of the Sentence, Depart Accursed, &c. §. 9. The Execution will certainly and immediately follow, §. 10. The Sinner warned to prepare for enduring it, §. 11. The Restection of a Sinner struck with the Terror of this Sentence.

HEAR, O Sinner, and I will speak (a) yet once more, as in the Name of God, of GOD, thine Almighty Judge; who if thou dost not attend to his Servants, will ere long speak unto thee in a more immediate manner, with an Energy and Terror which thou shalt not be able to resist.

Thy Pleas have been over ruled; or rather, they have been filenced. It appears before God, it appears to thine own Confcience, that thou hast nothing more to offer in Arrest of Judgment; therefore hear thy Sentence, and summon up, if thou canst, all the Powers of thy Soul to bear the Execution of it. It is indeed a very small Thing to be judged of Man's Judgment; but be that now judgeth thee, is the Lord (b.) Hear therefore, and temble, while I tell thee, how he will speak to thee; it rather, while I shew thee, from express Scripture, now he doth even now speak, and what is the authentick and recorded Sentence of his Word; even of His Word,

(a) Job xiii. 40.

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(b) 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

The Meditation of one giving up his Pleas Chap. 5. "Witness (z) to all thy Rebellion. Thou must see Him, O my Soul, sitting in Judgment upon thee: " And when he is friet to mark Iniquity (a), how wilt "thou answer bim for one of a I bousand (b)! And if thou canst not answer Him, in what Language will " He Speak to thee! LORD, as Things at present stand, I " can expect no other Language than that of Condem. " nation. And what a Condemnation it is ! Let me re-" flect upon it! Let me read my Sentence before I hear " it finally and irreverfibly past! I know, He has re-" corded in His Word; and I know in the general, " that the Representation is made with a gracious De-" fign. I know, that he would have us alarmed, that " we may not be destroyed. Speak to me, therefore, O "Gop, while Thou speakest not for the last Time, and " in Lircumstances when Thou wilt hear me no more. " Speak in the Language of effectual Terror, fo that it " be not to speak me into final Despair. And let Thy " Word, however painful in its Operation, be quick and " powerful, and sharper than any two edged Sword (c). " Let me not vainly flatter myself : Let me not be lest " a wretched Prey to those who would prophely smooth "Things to me (d), till I am fealed up under Wrath, " and feel thy Justice piercing my Soul, and the Poison " of Thine Arrows drinking up all my Spirits (e). " BEFORE I enter upon the particular View, I know in the general, that it is a terrible Thing to fall into the " Hands of the Living GOD (f). O Thou living Gon, " in one Sense I am already fallen into Thine Hands. 1 " am become obnoxious to thy Displeasure, justiy ob-" noxious to it: and whatever Thy Sentence may be " when it comes forth from thy Prefence (g), I must con-" demn myself, and justify Thee. Thou canst not treat " me with more Severity, than mine Iniquities bave de-" ferred: And how bitter foever that Cup of Trembling may be (n), which Thou shalt appoint for me, I give

(z) Jer. xxix. 23. (c) Heb. iv. 12.

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(d) Ifai. xxx. 10. (g) Pfal. xvii. 2.

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(b) Jobix 3. (c) Job vi. 4.

(h) Itai. h. 17.

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GOD's Law does now in general pronounce a Curse:
§ 3. It pronounces Death. §. 4. And being turned into Hell. §. 5. The Judgment-Day shall come. §. 6.
The Solemnity of that grand Process described, according to Scriptural Representations of it. §. 7, 8. With a particular Illustration of the Sentence, Depart Accursed, &c. §. 9. The Execution will certainly and immediately follow, §. 10. The Sinner warned to prepare for enduring it, §. 11. The Reslection of a Sinner struck with the Terror of this Sentence.

MEAR, O Sinner, and I will speak (a) yet once more, as in the Name of God, of GOD, thine Almighty Judge; who if thou dost not attend to his Servants, will ere long speak unto thee in a more immediate manner, with an Energy and Terror which thou shalt not be able to resist.

The Pleas have been over ruled; or rather, they have been filenced. It appears before God, it appears to thine own Conscience, that thou hast nothing more to offer in Arrest of Judgment; therefore hear thy Sentence, and summon up, if thou canst, all the Powers of thy Soul to bear the Execution of it. It is indeed a very soul Thing to be judged of Man's Judgment; but he that sow judgeth thee, is the Lord (b.) Hear therefore, and temble, while I tell thee, how he will speak to thee; it rather, while I shew thee, from express Scripture, low he doth even now speak, and what is the authentick and recorded Sentence of his Word; even of His Word,

(a) Job xiii. 40.

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(b) 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

who hath faid, Heaven and Earth Shall pass away; but

not one Tittle of my Word shall ever pass away (c).

6. 3. THE Law of God speaks, not to thee alone, O Sinner, not to thee by any particular Address; but in a most universal Language, it speaks to all Transgressors, and levels its Terrors against all Offences; great or Small without any Exception. And this is its Language: Curfed is every one, that continueth not in all Things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them (d). This is its Voice to the whole World; and this it speaks to thee. Its awful Contents are thy perional Concern, 0 Reader; and thy Conscience knows it. Far from continuing in all Things that are written therein to do them, thou canft not but be fenfible, that innumerable Evils be ve encompassed thee about (e). It is then manifest, Thou are the Man, whom it condemns; thou are even now curfed with a Curfe as Gon emphatically speaks (f); with the Curje of the most High GoD: Yea, all the Curjes which are written in the Book of the Law, are pointed against thee (g). God may righteously execute any of them upon thee in a Moment; and tho' thou at prefent feelest none of them, yet, if infinite Mercy doth not prevent, it is but a little while, and they will come into thy Bowels like Water, till thou art burft afunder with them, and shall penetrate like Oil into thy Bones (h).

§. 4. Thus faith the Lord, The Scul that finneth, it shall die (i). But thou half finned, and therefore thou are under a Sentence of Death. And, Ounhappy Creature, of what a Death! What will the End of these Things be? That the Agonies of dissolving Nature shall seize thee; that thy Soul shall be torn away from thy languishing Body, and thou return to the Dust from whence thou wast taken (k): This is indeed one awful Essel of Sin. In these affecting Characters has God, through all Nations and all Ages of Men, written the awful Register and Memorial of his holy Abhorrence of it, and righteous Displeasure against it. But alas, all this solemn Pomp and Horror of dying, is but the Opening of the dreadful Scene. It is but a rough Kind of Stroke

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(1) Pfa (0) A((r, 2)

⁽c) Matt. v. 18.

⁽t) Mal. iii. 9.

⁽i) Ezek. xviii. 4.

⁽d) Gal. iii. 10.

⁽³⁾ Deut. xxix. 20 (k) Pfal. civ. 29.

⁽c) Plal. xl. 12.

⁽h) Pfal. cix. 18.

by which the Fetters are knocked off, when the Criminal is led out to Torture and Execution.

- 6. 5. Thus faith the Lord, The Wicked shall be turn. ed into Hell, even all the Nations that forget GOD (1). Tho' there be whole Nations of them, their Multitudes and their Power shall be no Defence to them. shall be driven into Hell together; into that flaming Pris fon, which Divine Vengeance hath prepared; into Tothet, which is ordained of old, even for Royal Sinners, as well as for others, so little can any Human Distinction protect! He bath made it deep and large; the Pile thereof is Fire and much Wood, the Breath of the Lord, like a Stream of Brimstone, shall kindle it (m); and the flaming Torrent shall flow in upon it so fast, that it shall be turned into a Sea of liquid Fire; or, as the Scriptur: also expresses it, a Lake burning with Fire and Brimstone for ever and ever (n). This is the Second Death; and the Death, to which thou, O Sinner, by the Word of God art doomed.
- §. 6. AND shall this Sentence stand upon Record in vain? Shall the Law speak it, and the Gospel speak it? And shall it never be pronounced more audibly? and will God never require and execute the Punishment? He will, O Sinner, require it; and he will execute it; tho' He may feem for a while to delay. For well dot thou know, that He bath appointed a Day in which He will judge the whole World in Rightenufness, by that Man whom he hath ordained, of which he has given us Affarance, in baving raifed him from the Dead (0). And when Gonjudgeth the World, O Reader, whoever thou art, He will judge thee. And waile I remind thee of it, I would also remember, that he will judge me. And knowing the Terror of the Lord (p) that I may deliver my onon Soul (q) I would with all Plainness and Sincerity labour to deliver thine.

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§ 7. I THEREFORE repeat the folemn Warning: Thou, O Sinner, that frand before the Judgment Seat of Christ (r). Thou shalt see that pompous Appearance; the Description of which is grown so familiar to thee,

D 2 that (I) Pfal. ix. 17. (n) Rev. xxi 8. (m) Hai. xxx. 33. (0) Acts xvii. 31. (p) 2 Cor. v. 11. (q) Lzek, xxxm. 3. (r, 2 Cor. v. 10.

that the Repetition of it makes no Impression on thy Mind. But surely, stupid as thou now art, the shrill Trumpet of the Arch-Angel shall shake thy very Soul: And if nothing else can awaken and alarm thee, the Convulsions and Flames of a dissolving World shall do it.

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f. 8. Dost thou really think, that the Intent of Christ's final Appearance is only to recover his People from the Grave, and to raise them to Glory and Hap. piness? Whatever Assurance thou hast, that there shall be a Resurrection of the Just; thou hast the same, that there shall also be a Resurrection of the Unjust (s): That he shall separate the rising Dead one from another, as a Shepherd divideth the Sheep from the Goats (t. with equal Certainty, and with infinitely greater Ease. Or can you imagine, that he will only make an Example of some flagrant and notorious Sinners, when it is faid, that all the Dead, both small and great, shall Rand before GOD (u); and that even he rubo knew not his Master's Will, and consequently seems or all others to have had the fairest Excute for his Omission to obey it, yet even be, for that very Omission, shall be beaten, though with fewer Stripes (w)? Or can you think, that a Sentence to be delivered with to much Pomp and Majesty, a Sentence by which the righteous Judgment of God is to be revealed, and to have its most conspicuous and final Triumph, will be inconfiderable; or the Punishment to which it shall confign the Sinner, be slight or tolerable? There would have been little Reason to apprehend that, even if we had been left barely to our own Conjectures, what that Sentence should be. But this is far from being the Case: Our Lord Jesus Christ, in his infinite Condescension and Compassion, has been pleased to give us a Copy of the Sentence, and no Doubt, a most exact Copy and the Words which contain it, are worthy of being inscribed on every Heart. The King, amidft all the Splender-and Dignity in which he shall then appear Shall Jay unto those on his Right-Hand, Come ye bleffed 9 my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from th Foundation of the World (x) ! And where the Word of King is, there is Power indeed (y). And these Word

⁽s) Acts x xiv. 15. (w) Luke xii. 48.

⁽t) Matt. xxv. 32. (x) Matt. xxv. 34.

⁽u) Rev. xx. 16 (y) Eccles, viii.

Chap. 6. and of the Sentence that will then be paffed. 57 have a Power, which may justly animate the Heart of the humble Christian, under the most overwhelming Sorrow, and may fill him with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory (z). To be pronounced the Bleffed of the Lord! to be called to a Kingdom! to the immediate, the everlasting Inheritance of it! and of fuch a Kingdom! so well prepared, fo glorious, fo compleat, fo exquisitely fitted for the Delight and Entertainment of such Creatures, fo formed and fo renewed, that it shall appear worthy the eternal Counfels of Gon to have contrived it, worthy his eternal Love to have prepared it, and to have delighted itself with the Views of bestowing it upon his People: Behold, a bleffed Hope indeed! a lively glorious Hope, to which we are begotten again by the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead (a), and formed by the fanctifying Influence of the Spirit of God upon our Minds. But it is a Hope, from which thou, O Sinner, art at present excluded: And methinks, that might be grievous; to reflect, " These gracious Words shall Christ " speak to some; to Multitudes, but not to me: On me "there is no Blessedness pronounced: For me there is no "Kingdom prepared." But is that all? Alas, Sinner, our Lord hath given thee a dreadful Counterpart to this. He has told us, what He will fay to thee, if thou continuest what thou art; to thee and all the Nations of the impenitent and unbelieving World, be they ever fo numerous, be the Rank of particular Criminals ever fo great. He shall say to the Kings of the Earth, who have been Robels against him, to the Great and Rich Men, and the chief Captains and the mighty Men, as well as to every Bondman and every Freeman, of inferior Rank (b); DEPART FROM ME ACCURSED, INTO EVERLASTING FIRE, PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS ANceis (c). Oh, pause upon these weighty Words, that thou mayest enter into something of the Importance of them!

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§ 9. He will say, DEPART: You shall be driven from bis Presence with Disgrace and Insamy: From Him, the Source of Life and Blessedness, in a Nearness to whom all the Inhabitants of Heaven continually rejoice: You shall depart Accursed: You have broken

(2) 1 Pet. i. 8. (a) 1 Pet. i. 3. (b) Rev. vi. 15. (c) Matt. x x v. 41.

God's Law, and its Curse falls upon you; and you are, and shall be under that Curse, that abiding Curse: From that Day forward you shall be regarded by Gon, and all his Creatures, as an accurfed and abominable Thing; as the most detestable, and the most miserable Part of the Creation. You shall go INTO FIRE: And Oh, confider, into what Fire! Is it merely into one fierce Blaze, which shall consume you in a Moment, tho' with exquifite Pain? That were terrible. But Oh fuch Terfor are not to be named with these. Thine, Sinner is EVERLASTING FIRE: It is that, which our Lord hath in such awful Terms described as prevailing there, robere their Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quen bed; and then fays it a fecond Time, where their Worm dith not, and the Fire is not quenched; and again, in wonderful Compassion a third Time, where their Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched (d). Nor was it originally prepared, or principally intended for you : It was PRE-PARED FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS; for those fill grand Rebels, who were immediately upon their Fall doomed to it: And fince you have taken Part with them in their Apostacy, you must fink with them into that flaming Ruin; and fink fo much the deeper, as you have despised a Saviour, who was never offered to them. These must be your Companions, and your To mentors, with whom you must dwell for ever. And, Is it I that fey this? or fays not the Law, and the Gofpel, the fame? Does not the Lord Jesus Christ expres ly say it, who is the faithful and true Witness (e), even he, who himself is to pronounce the Sentence?

§. 10. And when it is thus pronounced, and proudunced by Him, shall it not also be executed? Who could imagine the contrary? who could imagine there should be all this pompous Declaration, to fill the Mind only with vain Terror, and that this Sentence should vanish into Emoak? You may easily apprehend, that this would be a greater Reproach to the Divine Administration, than if Sentence were never to be passed. And therefore, we might easily have interred the Execution of it, from the Process of the preceding Judgment. But lett the treacherous Heart of a Sinner should deceive him with

(d) Mark ix. 41, 46, 48.

(c) Rev. iii. 14.

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fo vain a Hope, the Assurance of that Execution is immediately added in very memorable Terms. It shall be done: It shall immediately be done. Then, on that very Day, while the Sound of it is yet in their Ears, the Wicked shall go away into everlasting Punishment (f): And thou, O Reader, whoever thou art, being found in their Number, shalt go away with them; shalt be driven on among all these wretched Multitudes, and plunged with them into eternal Ruin. The wide Gates of Hell shall be open to receive thee; they shall be shut upon thee for ever to inclose thee; and be fast barred, by the Almighty Hand of Divine Justice, to prevent all Hope, all possibility of Escape for ever.

§. II. AND now, prepare thyfelf to meet the Lord thy GOD (g): Summon up all the Refolution of thy Mind, to endure such a Sentence, such an Execution as this: For He will not meet thee as a Man (h); whose Heart may sometimes fail him when about to exert a needful Act of Severity, so that Compassion may prevail against Reason and Justice. No He will meet three as a GOD, whose Schemes and Purposes are all immoveable as his Throne. I therefore testify to thee in his Name this Day, that if GOD be true, he will thus speak; and that if he be able, he will thus as. And on Supposition of thy Continuance in thine Impenitence and Unbelief, thou art brought into this miserable Case; that if GOD be not either fulse or weak, thou art undone, thou art eter-

nally undone.

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The REFLECTION of a Sinner, Aruck with the Terror of this Sentence.

"WRETCH that I am! What shall I do? or whither shall I slee? I am weighed in the Balance, and am found wanting (i). This is indeed my Don; the Doom I am to expect from the Mouth of Christ himself; from the Mouth of Him that died for the Redemption and Salvation of Men. Dread ful Sentence! and so much the more dreadful, when considered in that View! To what shall I look to D4.

(b) Matt. xxv. 46.

(c) Amos iv. 12.

(d) Isat. xxv. 45.

() Dan. v. 27.

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to the Rocks, fall upon me, and to the Hills, cover me (k)?

"What shall I gain by that? Were I indeed over-" whelmed with Rocks and Mountains, they could not

" conceal me from the Notice of His Eye; and His

" Hand could reach me with as much Ease there, as

" any where elfe.

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" WRETCH indeed that I am! Oh that I had never " been born! Oh that I had never known the Dignity " and Prerogative of the rational Nature! Fatal Pre-" rogative indeed, that renders me obnoxious to Condemnation and Wrath! Oh that I had never been " instructed in the Will of God at all, rather than that " being thus instructed, I should have difregarded and " transgressed it ! Would to God, I had been allied to " the meanest of the Human Race, to them that come " nearest to the State of the Brutes, rather than that I " should have had my Lot in cultivated Life, amidst so " many of the Improvements of Reason, and (dreadful " Reflection!) amidst so many of the Advantages of " Religion too! and thus to have perverted all to my " own Destruction!-Oh that God would take away "this Rational Soul! But alas, it will live for ever; will " live to feel the Agonies of Eternal Death - Why have I " feen the Beauties and Glories of a World like this, to exchange it for that flaming Prison! Why have I " tasted so many of my Creator's Bounties, to wring " out at last the Dregs of his Wrath! Why have I " known the Delights of focial Life and friendly Con-" verse, to exchange them for the horrid Company of "Devils and damned Spirits in Tophet! On, who can " dwell with them in devouring Flames! who can lie

" ing Burnings (1)! " Buy whom have I to blame in all this, but myfelf!

" down with them in everlafting, everlafting, everlaft-

"What have I to accuse, but my own stupid incorrigi-" ble Folly? On what is all this terrible Ruin to be

" charged, but on this one fatal curfed cause, that hav-" ing broken GOD's Law, I rejected His Gospel too?

"YET far, O my Soul, in the Might of all thefe " doleful foreboding Complaints. Can I fay, that I "have finally rejected the Gospel? Am I not to this Day under the Sound of it? The Sentence is not yet gone forth again? me, in so determinate a Manner as to be utterly irreversible. Thro' all this gloomy Prospect one Ray of Hope breaks in, and it is possible I may be delivered.

"REVIVING Thought! Rejoice in it, O my Soul, tho' it be with Trembling; and turn immediately to that God, who, tho' provoked by Ten Thousand

"Offences, has not yet fivorn in his Wrath, that theu shalt "never be permitted, to hold farther Intercourse with

" Him, or to enter into bis Reft (m).

"I Do then, O blessed Lord, prostrate myself in the Dust before Thee. I own, I am a condemned and miserable Creature. But my Language is that of the humble Publican, GOD be merciful to me a Sinner (n)! Some general and confused Apprehensions I have of a Way, by which I may possibly escape. O God, whatever that Way is, shew it me, I beseech thee! Point it out so plainly, that I may not be able to mistake it! And Oh, reconcile my Heart to it, be it ever so humbling, be it ever so painful!

"Surety, Lord, I have much to learn; but be Thou my Teacher! Stay for a little Thine uplifted

"Hand; and in Thine infinite Compassion delay the Stroke, till I enquire a little farther, how I may finally

" avoid it !"

(m) Pfal. xcv. 11.

(n) Luke xviii. 13.

CHAP. VII.

The helpless State of the Sinner, under Condemnation.

The Sinner urged to consider, how he can be saved from this impending Ruin, §. 1, 2. (1.) Not by any I bing he can offer, §. 3. (2) Nor by any Thing he can endure, §. 4. (3.) Nor by any Thing he can do in the Course of suure Duiy, §. 5. (4) Nor by any Alliance with Fellow Sinners, on Earth, or in Hell, 6,—8. (5.) Nor by any Interposition, or Intercession of Angels or Saint it his Favour, §. 9. Hint of the only Method, to be afterwards more largely explained, Ibid. The Lamentation of a Sinner in this miserable Condition.

6. 1. CINNER, Thou haft heard the Sentence of O GOD, as it flands upon Record in His facred and immutable Word. And wilt thou lie down under it in everlasting Despair? Wilt thou make no Attempt to be delivered from it, when it speaks nothing less than ETERNAL DEATH to thy Soul ? If a criminal, condemned by Human Laws, has but the least Shadow of Hope, that he may possibly escape, he is all Attention to it. If there be a Friend, who he thinks can help him, with what a strong Importunity does he intreat the Interpolition of that Friend? And even while he is before the Judge, how difficult is it often to force him away from the Bar, while the Cry of Mercy, Mercy, Mercy, may be heard, tho' it be never to unfeafonable? A mere Possibility that it may make some Impression, makes him eager in it, and unwilling to be frienced and removed.

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6. 2. WILT thou not then, O Sinner, ere vet Execution is done, that Execution which may perhaps be done this very Day, wilt thou not cast about in thy Thoughts, what Measures may be taken for Deliverance? Yet what Measures can be taken? Consider attentively, for it is an Affair of Moment. Thy Wildom, thy Power, thy Eloquence, thine Interest, can never be exerted on a greater Occasion. If thou canst belo thyfelf, do. If thou half any fecret Source of Relief, go not out of thyfilf for other Assistance. If thou halt any Sacrifice to offer; if thou hast any Strength to exert; yea, if thou hast any Allies on Earth, or in the invisible World, who can defend and deliver thee; take thine own Way, so that thou mayest but be delivered at all, that we may not fee thy Ruin. But fay, O Sinner, in the Presence of God, what Sacrifice thou wilt present, what Strength thou wilt exert, what Allies thou wilt have recourse to, on fo urgent, fo hozele, i an Occasion. For hopeless I muit indeed pronounce it, if such Methods are taken.

S. 3. THE Juffice of GOD is injured: Halt thou any Atonement to make to it? If thou wait brought to an Enquiry and Proposal, like that of an awakened Sinner, Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow mylef before the bigh GOD ? Shall I come before bim with Burnt-Oferings, with Cilves of a Year old? Will the Lord be pleased with Thoujands of Rams, or with Ten Thufands of Rivers of Oil (a)? Alas! wert thou as great a Prince as Solomon himself, and couldnthou indeed purchase such Sacrifices as these, there would be no Room. to mention them. Lebanon would not be fufficient to burn, nor all the Beafts thereof for a Eurnt-Offering (b). Even under that Dispensation, which admitted and required Sacrifices in some Cases, the Blod of Bulls and of Goats, tho' it exempted the Offender from farther temporal Punishment, could not take away Sin (c), nor prevail by any Means to parge the Conscience in the Sight of Gon. And that Soul, that had done ought presumptuously was not allowed to bring any Sin Offering, or Trespass Offering at all, but was condemned to die without Mercy (d). Now Gop and thine own Conscience know, that thine Offences D 6

⁽a) M c. vi. 6. 7. (d, Numb. xv. 30.

^{(15) 1}fai. xl. 16.

⁽c) Heb. x. 4.

64 No Sufferings of his own will fave him, Chap. 7. Offences have not been merely the Errors of Ignorance and Inadvertercy, but that thou half sunned with an high Hand in repeated aggravated Circumstances, as thou half acknowledged already -Shouldst thou add, with the wretched Sinner described above, shall I give my Firstborn for my Transgression, the Fruit of my Body for the Sin of my Soul (e)? What could the Blood of a beloved Child do in such a Case, but dye thy Crimes so much the deeper, and add a yet unknown Horror to them? Thou half offended a Being of infinite Majesty; and if that Offence is to be expiated by Blood, it must be by another Kind of Blood, than that which flows in the Veins

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of thy Children, or in thine own.

§. 4. WILT thou then suffer thiself, till thou hast made fu'l Satisfaction? But where shall that Satisfaction be made?—Shall it be by any Calamities to be endured in this mortal momentary Life? Is the justice of God then esteemed so little a Thing, that the Sorrows of a few Days should suffice to answer its Demands ?-Or dost thou think of future Sufferings, in the invisible World? If thou doft, that is not Deliverance; and with Regard to that I may venture to fay, When thou halt made full Satisfaction, thou wilt be released: When thou hast paid the utmost Farthing of that Debt, thy Prison-Doors shall be opened: In the mean Time, thou must make thy Bed in Hell (f): And, O unhappy Man, wilt thou lie down there, with a secret Hope, that the Moment will come, when the Rigour of Divine Justice will not be able to inflict any thing more than thou half endured, and when thou mayest claim thy Discharge as a Matter of Right? It would indeed be well for thee, if thou couldit carry down with thee fuch a Hope, falle and flattering as it is: But alas, thou wilt fee Things in so just a Light, that to have no Comfort but this, will be eternal Despair. That one Word of thy Sentence, EVERLASTING Fire; that one Declaration, The Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched; will be sufficient to firike such a Thought into blank Consusion, and to overwhelm thee with hopeless Agony and Horror.

6. 5. Or do you think, that your future Reformation and Diligence in Duty for the Time to come, will procure your Discharge from this Sontence? Take heed, Sinner, what kind of Obedience thou thinkest of offering to an holy G. D. That must be spotless and compleat which his infinite Sanctity can approve and accept, if he consider thee in thyself alone: There must be no Inconstancy, no Forgetfulness, no Mixture of Sin attending it. And wilt thou, enfeebled as thou art, by fo much original Corruption, and fo many finful Habits contracted by innumerable actual Transgressions, undertake to render such an Obedience, and that for all the Remainder of thy Life? In vain wouldst thou attempt it, even for one Day. New Guilt would immediately plunge thee into new Ruin. But if it did not; if from this Moment to the very End of thy Life all were as compleat Obedience as the Law of God required from Adam in Paradife, would that be fusicient to cancel past Guilt? Would it discharge an old Debt, that thou hast not contracted a new one? Offer this to thy Neighbour, and fee if be will accept it for Payment; and if he will not, wilt thou presume to offer it to thy GoD.

§. 6. But I will not multiply Words on so plain a Subject. While I speak thus, Time is passing away, Death presses on, and Judgment is approaching. And what can save thee from these awful Scenes, or what can protect thee in them? Can the World save thee from that vain delusive Idol of thy Wishes and Pursuits, to which thou art facrificing thine eternal Hopes? Well dost thou know, that it will utterly for sake thee, when thou needest it most; and that not one of its Enjoyments can be carried along with thee into the invisible State: No, not so much as a Trifle to remember it by; if thou couldst desire to remember so inconstant, and so

treacherous a Friend, as the World has been.

one of them, if he were ever so desirous of doing it, that can give unto GOD a ransom for you (g), to deliver you from going down to the Grave, or from going down to the Hell? Alas, you will probably be so sensible of this, that when you lie on the Border of the Grave, you will be unwilling to see, or to converse with those, that were

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overwhelmed with their own Condemnation?

§ 8. As for the Powers of Darkness, you are fare they will be far from any Ability or Inclination to help you. Satan has been watching and labouring for your Defiruction, and he will triumph in it. But if there could be any thing of an amicable Confederacy between you, what would that be, but an Affociation in Ruin? For the Day of Judgment for ungodly Men, will also be the Judgment of these rebellious Spirits; and the Fire into which thou, O Sinner, must depart, is that which was

prepared for the De il and his Angels (h ..

§ . 9, WILL the celepial Spirits then fave thee? will they interpose their Power, or their Prayer, in thy Favour? An Interpolition of Power, when Sentence is gone forth against thee, were an Act of Rebellion against Heaven, which these holy and excellent Creatures would abhor. And when the final Pleafure of the Judge is known, instead of interceeding in vain for the wreiched Criminal, they would rather, with ardent Zeal for the Glory of their Lord, and cordial Acquiefcence in the Determination of his Wifdom and Judice, prepare to execute it. Yea, difficult as it may at present be to conceive it, it is a certain Truth, that the Servants of Christ, who now most tenderly love you, and most affectionately feek your Salvation; not excepting thole, who are allied to you in the nearest Bonds of Nature, or of Friendship; even they shall put their Amen to it. Now indeed, their Bowels yearn over you, and their Eyes pour out Tears on your Account: Now they exposturate with you, and pleas with God for you, if by any Means, while yet there is Hope, you may be plucked as a Firebrand out of the Burning (1). But alas, their Remonstrances you will not regard: And as for their Prayers, what should they ask for you? What but this, that you may fee yourserves to be undone? and that, utterly despairing of any Help from yourselves, or from any created Power, you may lie before God in Humility and Brokenness of Heart; that submitting yourselves to his righteous

The LAMENTATION of a Sinner in this miserable Condition.

H doleful, uncomfortable, helples State! Oh ... Wretch that I am, to have reduced myself to it! Poor, empty, miserable abandoned Creature! "Where is my Pride, and the haughtiness of my " Heart? where are my Idol Deities, whom I have " loved, and ferved, after whom I have walked, and " whom I have fought (k), whilst I have been multiplying my Transgressions against the Majesty of " Heaven? Is there no Heart to have Compassion upon me? Is there no hand to fave me? Have Pity u; on " me, have Pity upon me, O my Friends; for the Hand of " GOD bat's touched me (1), hath feized me ! I feel it " prelling me hard, and what shall I do? Perhaps they have Pity upon me: But plas, how feeble a Com. " passion! Only if there be any where in the whole " Compass of Nature any Help, tell me subcre it may be " found! O point it out; direct me towards it; or " rather, confounded and aftonished as my Mind is, " take me by the Hand, and lead me to it! "O ye Ministers of the Lord, whose Office it is to " guide and comfort diffressed Souls, take Pity upon me!

"I fear, I am a Pattern of many other helpless Creatures, who have the like Need of your Assistance.
"Lay asside your other Cares, to care for my Soul; to
"care for this precious Soul of mine, which lies as it
"were bleeding, to Death, (if that Expression may be
"used), while you perhaps hardly afford me a Look;
"or glancing an Eye upon me, pass over to the other
"Side (m). Yet, alas, in a Case like mine, what can

(k) Jer. viii. 2. (l) Job xix. 21. (m) Luke x. 31.

(n) 2 Kings vi. 27. (q) Pfal. lt. 4. (t) Pfal. lt. 1. (o) Numb. xvi. 2. (p) Jonah ii. 2. (s) Ifai. lv. 8, 9. (u) Pfal. cxxxix, 24.

" spread itself thro' all my Nature, to turn that noble

" Medicine into Poison !"

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CHAP. VIII.

News of Salvation by Christ brought to the convinced and condemned Sinner.

The awful Things which have hitherto been said, intended not to grieve, but to help, §. 1. After some Reflection on the Pleasure with which a Minister of the Gospel may deliver the Message avith which he is charged, §. 2. And some Reasons for the Repetition of what is in Speculation so generally known, §. 3. The Author proceeds briefly to declare the Substance of these glad Tidings; wiz. That GOD, having in his Infinite Compassion sent his Son to die for Sinners, is now reconcileable through Him: §. 4,—6. So that the most beinous Transgression shall be entirely pardoned to Believers, and they made compleatly and eternally happy, §. 7, 8. The Sinners Resselion on this good News.

Gospel, and where-ever it is cordially received, it is the glorious Effects of it, to fill the Heart with Sentiments of Love; to teach us to abhor all unnecessary Rigour and Severity, and to delight not in the Grief, but in the Happiness of our Fellow-Creatures. I can hardly apprehend, how he can be a Christian, who takes Pleasure in the Distress which appears even in a Brute, much less in that of a Human Mind; and especially in such Distress as the Thoughts I have been proposing must give, if there be any due Attention to their Weight and Energy. I have often selt a tender Regret, while I have been representing these Things; and I could have wished from mine Heart, that it had not been necessary

necessary to have placed them in so severe and so painful a Light. But now I am addressing myself to a Part of my Work, which I undertake with unusterable Pleasure; and to that, which indeed I had in View, in all those awful Things which I have already been laying before you. I have been shewing you, that, if you hitherto have lived in a State of Impenitence and Sin, you are condemned by Gon's righteous Judgment, and have in yourself no Spring of Hope, and no Possibility of Deliverance. But I mean not to leave you under this sad Apprehension, to lie down and die in Despair complaining of that cruel Zeal, which has tormented you before your time (a).

§. 2. ARISE, O thou dejected Soul, that art proftrate in the Dutt before God, and trembling under the Terror of His Righteous Sentence; for I am commifsioned to tell thee, that the thou bast destroyed thyself, in GOD is thene Help (b). I bring thee good Tidings of great Joy (c), which delight mine own Heart, while I proclaim them, and will I hope reach, and revive thine; even the Tidings of Salvation, by the Blood and Righteousies of the Rudbemer. And I give it thee for thy greater Security, in the Words of a gracious and forgiving God, that He is in Christ reconciling the World, unto himself and

not imputing to them their irefrasses (d).

of a This is the best News that ever was heard, the most important Message which God ever sent to his Creatures: And the I doubt not at all, but living, as you have done, in a Christian Country, you have heard it often, perhaps a Thousand and a Thousand Times; I will with all Simplicity and Plainness, repeat it to you again, and repeat it as if you had never heard it before. It thou, O Sinner, shouldst now for the first Time seel it, then it will be as a New Gospel unto thee, though so samiliar to thine Ear; nor shall it be grievous forme to speak what is so common, since to you it is safe and necessary (e). They who are most deeply and intimately acquainted with it, instead of being cloyed and satisted, will hear it with distinguished Pleature; and as for those who have hitherto slighted it, I am sure they had Need

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⁽a) Matt. viii. 29. (d) 2 Cor. v. 19.

⁽b) Hof. xiii. 9.

⁽c) Lukeii. 10.

chap. 8. GOD has fent b's Son to die for Sinner. 71
to hear it again. Nor is it absolutely impossible, that
fone one Soul at least may read these Lines, who hath
never been clearly and fully instructed in this important
Doctrine, tho' his everlasting all depends on knowing
and receiving it. I will therefore take Care, that such a
one shall not have it to plead at the Bar of Gop, that
tho' he lived in a Christian Country, he was never
plainly and faithfully taught the Doctrine of Salvation
by Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life,

by rubom alone we come unto the Father (f).

6. 4. I Do therefore testify unto you this Day, that the holy and gracious Majesty of Heaven and Earth, forefeeing the fatal Apoffacy into which the whole Haman Race would fall, did not determine to deal in a Way of firict and rigorous Severity with us, fo as to confign us over to universal Ruin and inevitable damnation; but on the contrary, he determined to enter into a Treaty of Peace and Reconciliation, and to publish to all, whom the Gospel should reach, the express Offers of Life and Glory, in a certain Method, which his Infinite Wisdom judged fuitable to the Purity of his Nature, and the Honour of his Government. This Method was indeed a most astonishing one, which, familiar as it is to our Thoughes and our Tongues, I cannot recollect and mention without great Amazement. He determined to fend His own Son into the World, the Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person (g), Partaker of his own Divine Perfections and Honours, to be not merely a Teacher of Righteaufnels, and a Messenger of Grace, but also a Sacrifice for the Sins of men: And would confent to his faving them on no other Condition but this, that he should not only labour, but die in the Cause.

Infinite Wildom saw most convenient, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared in Human Flesh; and after he had gone through incessant and long continued Faligues, and borne all the preceding Injuries, which the Ingratitude and Malice of Men could instict, he voluntarily submitted himself to Death, even the Death of the Cross (h): and having been delivered for our Oflences, was raised again for

and for ever (n).

6. 6. This Goffel do I therefore now preach, and proclaim unto thee, O Reader, with the fincerest Defire, that thro' Divine Grace, it may this very Day be Sa vation to thy Soul (o). Know therefore, and confider it, who foever thou art, that as furely as these Words are now before thine Eyes, so sure it is, that the Incarnate Son of God was made a Spectacle to the World, and to Angels, and to Men (b); his Back torn with Scourges, his Head with Thorns, his Limbs stretched out as on a Rack, and nailed to the accurfed Tree; and in this miserable Condition he was hung by his Hands and his Feer, as an Object of publick Infamy and Contempt. Thus did he die, in the Midst of all the Taunts and Insults of his cruel Enemies, who thirsted for his Blood; and, which was the saddest Circumstance of all, in the Midst of these Agonies with which he closed the most innocent, perfect, and useful Life that ever was spent on Earth, he had not those Supports of the Divine Presence, which finful Men have often experienced, when they have been suffering for the Testimony of their Conscience. They have often burst out into Transports of Joy and Songs of Praise, while their Executioners have been glutting their hellish Malice, and more than favage Barbarity, by making their Torments artificially grievous; but the crucified Jesus cried out, in the Diffress of his spotless and holy Soul, My GOD, my GOD, why bast thou for saken me (q)?

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⁽i) Rom. iv. 25. (m) Mark xvi. 15.

⁽k) Actsi. 9-11.

⁽n) Heb. xiii. 8. (q) Matt. xxviii. 46. (p) 1 Cor. iv. 9.

⁽¹⁾ Luke xxiv. 40: (o) Luke xix. 9.

§ 7. Look upon our dear Redeemer; Look up to this mournful, dreadful, yet in one View, delightful Spectacle; and then alk thine own Heart, Do I believe that Jesus suffered and died thus? And why did he suffer and die? Let me answer in God's own Words, He was wounded for our Transgressions, be was bruised for our Iniquities, and the Chastifement of our Peace was upon him, that by his Stripes, we might be healed: It pleased the Lord to bruise bim, and to put bim to Grief, when he made his Soul an Offering for Sin; for the Lord laid on him the Iniquity of us all (r). So that I may address you in the Words of the Apostle, Be it known unto you therefore, that through this Man is preached unto you the Forgiveness of Sins (s); as it was his Command, just after he rose from the Dead, that Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached in his Name among all Nations, -beginning at fernfalem (t); the very Place, where his Blood had so lately been shed in such a cruel Manner. I do therefore tellify to you, in the Words of another inspired Writer, that Christ was made Sin, that is, a Sin Offering, for us, tho' be knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of GOD in him (u); that is, that thro' the Righteousness he has fulfilled, and the Atonement he has made, we might be accepted by God as righteous, and be not only pardoned, but received into his Favour. To you is the Word of this Salvation fent (x); and to you, O Reader, are the Bleffings of it even now offered by Goo, fincerely offered; fo that, after all that I have faid under the tormer Heads, it is not your having broken the Law of Goo, that shall prove your Ruin, if you do not also reject his Gospel. It is not all those Legions of Sins, which rife up in Battle Array against you, that shall be able to destroy you, if Unbelief do not lead them on, and final Impenitency do not bring up the Rear. I know, that Guilt is a timorous Thing, I will therefore speak in the Words of God himself, nor can any be more comfortable: He that believeth on the Son, bath everlasting Life (y); and he shall never come into Condemnation (2): There is therefore now

⁽r) Isai. iii. 5, 6, 10. (u) 1 Cor. v. 21.

⁽s) Acts xiii. 38. (x) Acts xiii 26.

⁽t) Luke xxiv. 47. (y) John in. 36.

⁽²⁾ John v. 24.

wasked thee from thy Sins in his own Blood (d). §. 8. Nor is it necessary, in order to thy being released from Guilt, and intitled to this high and compleat Felicity, that thou shouldst, before thou wilt venture to apply to Jefus, bring any good Works of thine own to recommend thee to his Acceptance. It is indeed true that if thy Faith be fincere, it will certainly produce them: But I have the Authority of the Word of God to tell thee, that if thou this Day fincerely believest in the Name of the Son of GOD, thou shalt this Day be taken under his Care, and be numbered among those of bis Shiep, to whom he hath graciously declared, that he will give Eternal Life, and that they shall never periff (e). Thou halt no Need therefore to fay, W bo skall go up into Heaven, or who fall dejeend into the Deep for me? For the Word is nigh thee, in thy Mouth, and in thine Heart (f). With this joyful Message I leave thee; with

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⁽a) Rom. viii. 1. (d) Rev. i. 5.

⁽b) Rom. v. 20.

⁽c) Rom. v. 2.

⁽e) John x. 28.

⁽f) Rom. x. b, 7, 8.

Chap. 8. The Sinner's Reflection on this good News with this fait ful Saying, indeed worthy of all Acceptation (g); with this Goffel, O Sinner, which is my Life; and which, if thou dost not reject it, will be thine too.

The Sinner's REFLECTION on this good News.

OH my Soul, how astonishing is the Message, "which thou hast this Day received! I have " indeed aften heard it before; and it is grown fo " common to me, that the Surprize is not fenfible. " But reflect, O my Soul, what is it thou half heard; " and fay, whether the Name of a Saviour, whose Meilege it is, may not well be called Wonderful, Counfellor " (h), when he displays before thee such Wonders of " Love, and proposes to thee juch Counsels of Peace? " Blessed Jesus, is it indeed thus! Is it not the " Piction of the Human Mind? Surely it is not! "What Human Mind could have invented or conceiv-" ed it? Is it a plain, a certain Fact, that Thou didft " leave the Magnificence and Joy of the Heavenly "World, in Compassion to such a Wretch as I! Oh " haoft Thou, from that Height of Dignity and Feli-" city, only looked down upon me for a Moment, and " fent some gracious Word to me for my Direction " and Comfort, even by the least of Thy Servants, " juftly might I have producted myself in grateful Ad-" miration, and have kiffed the very Footfleps of him " that published the Salvation (i). But didit thou con-" descend to be Thyself the Messenger! What Grace " had that been, tho' Thou hadft but once in Person " made the Declaration, and immediately returned back " to the Throne, from whence Divine Compassion " brought Thee down! But this is not all the Tri-" umph of thine illustrious Grace. It not only brought "Thee down to Earth, but kept thee here in a " frail and wretched Tabernacle, for long successive "Years: And at length, it cost thee thy Life, and " stretched thee dut as a Malefactor upon the Cross, " after thou hadst borne Insult and Cruelty, which it may " juttly wound my Heart so much as to think of. " thus (h) Ifai. ix. 6. (i) Ifai. lin. 71

(g) 1 Tim. is 15.

(k) Rev. v. 9. (l) Mark ix. 24. (m) 2 Cor. vi. 1. (p) Rom. i, 16. (o) Luke vii. 47. (p) Ecclef. vii. 6.

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CHAP. IX.

A more particular Account of the Way, by which this Salvation is to be obtained.

An Enquiry into the Way of Salvation by Christ being supposed, §. 1. The Sinner is in general directed to Repentance and Faith, §. 2. And urged to give up all Self-Dependence, §. 3. And to seek Salvation by Free Grace, §. 4. A Summary of more particular Directions is proposed: §. 5. (1.) That the Sinner should apply to Christ, §. 6. With a deep Abborrence of his former Sins. §. 7. And a sirm Resolution of forsaking them, §. 8. (2.) That he solution commit his Soul into the Hands of Christ, the great vital Act of Faith, §. 9. Which is exemplified at large, §. 10. (3.) That he makes it in Fact the governing Care of his future Life to obey and imitate Christ, §. 11. This is the only Method of obtaining Gospel Salvation, §. 12. The Sinner deliberating on the Expediency of accepting it.

Ing to me with the Enquiry, which the Jews once addressed to our Lord; What shall we do, that we may work the Works of GOD (a)! "What Method shall "I take to secure that Redemption and Salvation, which I am told Christ has procured for his People?" Iwould answer it as seriously, and carefully as possible; as one that knows, of what Importance it is to you to be rightly informed; and that knows also, how strictly he is to answer to God, for the Sincerity and Care with which the Reply is made. May I be enabled to speak as his Oracle (b), that is, in such a Manner, as faithfully to echo back what the Sacred Oracles teach!

(a) John iv. 28. (b) 1 Pet. iv. 11.

§ 2. And here, that I may be sure to follow the safest Guides, and the fairest Examples, I must preach Salvation to you, in the Way of Repentance toward GOD, and of Faith in our Lera Jesus Christ (c): That good old Doctrine, which the Apostles preached, and which no Man can presend to change, but at the Peril of his own Soul, and of theirs who attend to him.

§ 3. I SUPPOSE, that you are, by this Time, convinced of your Guilt and Condemnation, and of your own lnability to recover yourfelf. Let me nevertheless urge you to feel that Conviction yet more deeply, and to impress it with yet greater Weight upon your Soul; that you have undone yourfelf, and that in yourfelf is not your Help found (d). Be persuaded therefore, expressly, and solemnly, and sincerely, to give up all Sef-Dependence; which, if you do not guard against, will be ready to return secretly, before it is observed, and will lead you to attempt building up what you have just been destroying.

6. 4. Be affired, that if ever you are faved, you must ascribe that Salvation entirely to the Free Grace of GOD, If, guilty and miserable as you are, you are not only accepted, but crowned, you must lay down your Crown with all humble Acknowledgment before the Throne (e). No Flesh must glory in his Presence; but he that glorieth, must glory in the Lord: For of him are we in Chil Jefus, who of GOD is made unto us Wifdem, and Righteoujness, and Santification, and Redemption (1). And you must be sensible, you are in such a State, as, having none of these in yourself, to need them in another. You must therefore be sensible, that you are ignorant and guilty, polluted and enflaved; or, as our Lord expresses it, with regard to some who were under a Christian Profestion, that as a Sinner, you are wretched, and miserable and poor, and bling, and naked (g).

§. 5. If these Views be deeply impressed upon your Mind, you will be prepared to receive what I am now to say. Hear therefore in a sew Words your Duty, you Remedy, and your Sarety which consists in this, "That you must apply to Christ, with a deep Abhorrence of your former Sins, and a sirm Resolution of forsaking

(e) Rev. iv. 10

(d) Hof. xiii. 9. (f) 1 Cor. i. 29, 30, 31. (g) Rev. iii. 17. give to Chysur down prefer all T is full whave

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Chap. 9. and Christ alone be fought to.

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"them; forming that Resolution in the Strength of His Grace, and fixing your Dependence on Him, for your Acceptance with God, even while you are purposing to do your very best, and when you have

" actually done the best you ever will do in Conse-

" quence of that Purpose."

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6. The first and most important Advice that I can give you in your present Circumstances, is, that you look to Christ and apply your felf to him. And here, fay not in your Heart, Who shall ascend into Heaven, to bring him down to me (h)? or who shall raise me up thither, to present me before him? The blessed Jesus, by whom all Things consist (i), by whom the whole System of them is supported, " forgotten as he is by most that bear his " Name," is not far from any of us (k): Nor could be have promised to have been, where ever Two or Three are met together in his Name (1), but in Consequence of those truly Divine Perfections, by which he is every where present. Would you therefore, O Sinner, defite to be faved? Go to the Saviour. Would you defire to be delivered? Look to that great Deliverer: And tho' you should be so overwhelmed with Guilt and Shame, and Fear, and Horror, that you should be incapable of speaking to him, fall down in this speechless Confusion at his Feet; and behold him as the Lamb of GOD, that taketh array the Sins of the World (m).

S. 7. Behold him therefore with an attentive Eye, and say, Whether the Sight does not touch, and even melt thy very Heart! Dost thou not seel, what a soolish; and what a wresched Creature thou hast been; that for the sake of such low and fordid Gratistications and Interests, as those which thou hast been pursuing, thou shouldst thus kill the Prince of Life (n)? Behold the deep Wounds which he bore for thee, Look on him whom thou hast pierced, and surely thou must mourn (o), unless thine Heart be hardened into Stone. Which of thy past Sins cansi thou rested upon, and say, "For that it was "worth my while, thus to have injured my Saviour, and to have exposed the Son of God to such suffer-

E 2 "ings!"

(h) Rom, x. 6. (i) Col. i. 17. (k) Acts xvii. 27. (n) Acts iii. 15. (n) Acts iii. 15.

⁽¹⁾ Matt. xviii. 20. (m) John i. 29. (n) Acts iii. 15.

"ings?" And what future Temptations can arise so

confiderable, that thou thouldit fay, " For the Sake of

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Chap. 9.

this, I will crucify my Lord again (p)?" Sinner, thou must repent; thou must repent of every Sin; and must forsake it: But if thou doest it to any Purpose, I well know it must be as at the Foot of the Cross. Thou must sacrifice every Lust, even the dearest; tho' it should be like a Right Hand, or a Right Eye (q): And therefore, that thou mayest, it possible be animated to it, I have led thee to that Altar, on which Christ himse f was sacrificed for thee, an Offering of a sweet smelling Sawour (r). Thou must yield up thyself to GOD, as one alive from the Dead (s): And therefore I have shewed thee at what a Price he purchased thee; for thou wast not redeemed with corruptible Things, as Silver and Gola, but with the pre-

as before the Lord, What does thine own fleart fay to it? Art thou grieved for thy former Offences? Art thou willing to forfake thy Sins? Art thou willing to become the chearful, thankful Servant of him, who hath

cions blood of the Son of GOD, that Lamb without Ble-

purchased thee with his own Blood?

§. 8. I will suppose such a Purpose as this rising in thine Heart. How determinate it is, and how effectual it may be, I know not: What different Views may arise hereafter, or how soon the present Sense may wear off. But this I assuredly know, that thou wilt never see Reason to change these Views; for however thou mayest alter, the Lord Tosus Christ is the same Yesterday, To-Day, and for Ever (u). And the Reasons, that now recommend Repentance and Faith, as fit and as necessary, will continue invariable, as long as the Perfections of the Blessed God are the same, and as long as his Son continues the same.

§ 9. But while you have these Views and these Purposes, I must remind you, that this is not all which is necessary to your Salvation. You must not only purpose, but as God gives Opportunity, you must all, as those who are convinced of the Evil of Sin, and of the Necessary and Excellence of Holiness. And that you may be enabled

⁽p) Heb. vi. 5. (s) Rom. vi. 12.

⁽t) 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

⁽r) Eph. v. 2. (u) Heb. xiii. 8.

Chap. 9. enabled to do so in other Instances, you must in the first Place, and as the first great Work of GOD, (as our Lord himself calls it,) believe in him whom GOD bath fent (x): You must confide in him; " must commit your " Soul into the Hands of Chrift, to be faved by him in " his own appointed Method of Salvation." This is the great Act of faving Faith; and I pray God, that you may experimentally know what it means; fo as to be able to fay with the Apostle Paul, in the near Views of Death itself, I know whom I have believed, and am perfunded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him until that Day (y); that great decifive Day, which if we are Christians, we have always in View. To this I would urge you; and Oh that I could be so happy as to engage you to it, while I am illustrating it in this, and the following Addresses! Be affured, you must not apply yourselves immediately to GOD, as absolutely or in himself considered, in the Neglect of a Mediator. It will neither be acceptable to him, nor fafe for you, to rush into his Presence, without any Regard to his own Son, whom he hath appointed to introduce Sinners to him. And if you come otherwise, you come as one who is not a Sinner. The very Manner of presenting the Address will be interpreted as a Denial of that Guilt, with which he knows you are chargeable: And therefore he will not admit you, nor fo much as look upon you. And accordingly, our Lord, knowing how much every Man living was concerned in this, fays in the most univerial Terms, No Man cometh unto the Father but by me (z).

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6. 10. Apply therefore to this glorious Redeemer, amiable (as he will appear to every believing Eye) in the Blood which he shed upon the Cross, and in the Wounds which he received there. Go to him, O Sinner, this Day, this Moment, with all thy Sins about thee. Go just as thou art; for if thou wilt never apply to him, till thou art first righteous and holy, thou wilt never be righteous and holy at all; nor canst be so on this Supposition, unless there were some Way of being so without him; and then, there would be no Occasion for applying to him for Righteousness and Holiness. It were indeed as if it should be faid, that a fick Man

E 3 (x) John vi. 20. (y) 2 Tim. i. 12. (z) John xiv. 6.

The Language of one submitting to Christ. Chap. q. flould defer his Application to a Physician, till his Health is recovered. Let me therefore repeat it without Offence, Go to him just as thou art, and fay, (Oh that thou mayst this Moment be enabled to say it from thy very Soul !) " Blessed Jesus, I am furely one of the most fin-" ful, and one of the most miserable Creatures, that ever fell profirate before Thee: Nevertheleis I come, " because I have heard that thou didst once say, Come unto me all ye that labour, and are beauty laden, and I : will give you Rest (a). I come, because I have heard, " Thou didft graciously say, Him that cometh unto me, I " will in no wife cast out (b). O thou Prince of Peace, " O thou King of Glory, I am a condemned miserable " Sinner, I have ruined my own Soul, and am con-"demned for ever, if thou dost not help me and save " me. I have broken thy Father's Law, and thine, " for Thou art one with him (c). I have deferved Cones demnation and Wrath; and I am, even at this very " Moment, under a Sentence of everlasting Destruction: " A Destruction, which will be aggravated by all the " Contempt which I have cast upon Thee, O thou " bleeding Lamb of GOD: For I cannot and will not " diffemble it before thee, that I have wronged Thee, " most basely and ungratefully wronged Thee, under "the Character of a Saviour, as well as of a Lord. "But now, I am willing to submit to Thee; and I have " brought my poor trembling Soul, to lodge it in thine " Hands, if thou wilt condescend to receive it; and if " thou dost not, it must perish. O Lord, I lie at thy " Feet: Stretch out thy Golden Sceptre that I may live (d)! Yea, if it please the King, let the Life of my Soul " be given me at my Petition (e)! I have no Treasure, " wherewith to pu chase it; I have no Equivalent to " give thee for it: But if that compassionate Heart of " thine can find a Pleasure in saving one of the most " distressed Creatures under Heaven, that Pleasure thou " mayst here find. O Lord, I have feolishly attempted " to be mine own Saviour; but it will not do. I am " fensible the Attempt is vain; and therefore I give it " over, and look unto Thee. On Thee, bleffed Josus, who (a) Matt. xi. 28. (c) John x. 30. (b) John vi. 37.

(e) Efth. vii. 3.

(d) Eith. iv. 11.

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" fure and stedfast, do I defire to fix my Anchor. " Thee, as the only fure Poundation, would I build " my eternal Hopes. To thy Teaching, O thou un-" erring Prophet of the Lord, would I submit: Be thy "Doctrines ever so mysterious, it is enough for me that "Thou Thyself haft faid it. To thine Atonement, "Obedience, and Intercession, O Thou holy and ever " acceptable High-Priest, would I trust. And to thy "Government, O Thou exalted Sovereign, would I " yield a willing, delightful Subjection: In Token of " Reverence and Love, I kiss the Son (f); I kiss the " Ground before his Feet. I admit Thee, O my " Saviour, and welcome thee with unutterable Joy, to " the Throne in my Heart. Ascend it, and reign there " for ever! Subdue mine Enemies, O Lord, for they " are thine; and make me thy faithful, and zealous " Servant; faithful to Death, and zealous to Eternity."

6. 11. Such as this must be the Language of your very Heart before the Lord. But then remember, that in Consequence hereof it must be the Language of your Life too. The unmeaning Words of the Lips would be a vain Mockery. The most affectionate Transport of the Passion, should it be transient and inessectual, would be but like a Blaze of Straw, presented instead of Incen/s at his Altar. With fuch Humility, with fuch Love, with fuch cordial Self-Dedication and Submission of Soul, must thou often prostrate thyself, in the Presence of Christ. and then thou must go away, and keep him in thy View; must go away, and live unto God thro' him, denying Ungodliness, and Worldly Lusts, and behaving thyself foberly, righteously and godly in this vain ininaring World (g). You must make it your Care, to hew your Love by Obedience; by forming yourfelf as much as possible, according to the Temper and Manner of Jesus, in whom you believe: You must make it the great Point of your Ambition, (and a nobler View you cannot entertain,) to be a living Image of Christ; that fo far as Circumstances will allow, even those who have heard and read but little of him, may, by observing you, in some Measure see and know what Kind of a Life that of the Bleffed Jesus was. And this must be your E 4 constant

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ful even unto Death, expecting the Crown of Life (i). §. 12. This, fo far as I have been able to learn from the Word of Gen, is the Way to Safety and Glory; the furest, the only Way you can take. 'Tis the Way, which every faithful Minister of Christ has trod, and is treading; and the Way, to which, as he tenders the Salvation of his own Soul, he must direct others. We cannot, we would not alter it, in Favour of ourselves, or of our dearest Friends. It is the Way, in which alone, fo far as we can judge, it becomes the Bleffed GOD to fave his Apostate Creatures. And therefore, Reader, I beseech and intreat you, feriously to consider it; and let your own Conscience answer, as in the Presence of Goo, whether you are willing to acquiesce in it, or not. But know, that to reject it, is thine Eternal Death. For as there is no other Name under Heaven given among Men whereby we can be faved (k), but this of Jesus of Nazareth, so there is no other Method but this, in which Jesus himself will save us.

The Sinner deliberating on the Expediency of falling in with this Method of Salvation.

ONSIDER, O my Soul, what Answer wilt thou " return to such Proposals as these? Surely, " if I were to speak the first Dictate of this corrupt and degenerate Heart, it would be, This is a hard Saying, s' and who can hear it (1)? To be thus humbled, thus " mortified, thus subjected! To take such a Yoke upon " me, and to carry it as long as I live! To give up et every darling Luft, tho' dear to me as a Right Eye, " and feemingly necessary as a Right Hand! To submit of not only my Life, but my Heart, to the Command " and Discipline of another! To have a Master there, " and fuch a Master, as will controll many of its fa-" vourite Affections, and direct them quite into another " Channel! A Master, who himself represents His Com-" mands, (k) Acts iv. 12. (h) Matt. xvi. 24. () Rev. ii. 13.

(1) John vi. 60.

mands, by taking up the Cross and following him!
To adhere to the strictest Rules of Godliness and Sobriety, of Righteousness and Truth; not departing from
them, in any allowed Instance, great or small, upon
any Temptation, for any Advantage, to escape any
Inconvenience and Evil, no, not even for the Preservation of Life itself; but, upon a proper Call of Providence, to act as if I hated even my own Life (m)!
Lord, it is hard to Flesh and Blood: And yet I perceive and feel, there is one Demand yet harder than
this.

"WITH all these precautions, with all these Morti-" fications, the Pride of my Nature would find some " inward Refource of Pleasure, might I but secretly " think that I had been my own Saviour; that my own "Wisdom, and my own Resolution, had breken the " Bands and Chains of the Enemy; and that I had "drawn out of my own Treasures, the Price with " which my Redemption was purchased. But muit I " lie down before another, as guilty and condemned, " as weak and helpless; and must the Obligation be " multiplied, and must a Mediator have his Share too? " Must I go to the Cross for my Salvation, and seek my "Glory from the Infamy of that? Must I be stripped " of every pleafing Pretence to Righteousness, and " stand in this Respect upon a Level with the vilest of " Men? fland at the Bar amongst the greatest Crimi-" nals, pleading Guilty with them, and feeking Deli-" verance by that very all of Grace, whereby they have " obtained it?

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"I dare not deliberately fay, This Method is unrea"fonable. My Conscience testifies, that I have sinned
"and cannot be justified before God, as an innocent,
"and obedient Creature. My Conscience tells me, that
"all these humbling Circumstances are sit: That it is
"fit, a convicted Criminal should be brought upon his
"Knees: That a captive Rebel should give up the
"Weapons of his Rebellion, and bow before his Sove"reign, if he expect his Life. Yea, my Reason, as
"well as my Conscience, tells me, that it is sit and ne"cessary, that if I am saved at all, I should be saved

E 5 (m) Luke xiv. 26.

(u) Rom. vi. 13. (o) Rom. vii. 23, 24. (p) Gen. xix. 16.

" before the Storm of Thy flaming Vengeance fall,

" and there be no more Escaping !"

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CHAP. X.

The Sinner feriously urged and intreated to accept of Salvation in this Way.

Since many who have been impressed with these Things suffer the Impression to wear off in vain, §. 1. Strongly as the Case speaks for itself, Sinners are to be intreated to accept this Salvation, §. 2. Accordingly the Reader, is entreated, (1.) By the Majesty and Mercy of GOD; §. 3. (2.) By the dying Love of our Lord Jesus Christ: §. 4. (3.) By the Regard due to Fellow-Creatures; §. 5. (4.) By the Worth of his own Immortal Soul. §. 6. The Matter is solemnly left with the Reader as before GOD, §. 7. The Sinner yielding to these Intreaties, and declaring his Acceptance of Salvation by Christ.

HUS far have I often known Convictions and Impressions to arise, (if I might judge by the strongest Appearance,) which after all have worn off again. Some unhappy Circumstance of external Temptation, ever joined by the inward Reluctance of an unfanctified Heart to this holy and humbling Scheme of Redemption, has been the Ruin of Multitudes. And thro' the Deceitfulness of Sin, they have been hardened (a). till they feem to have been utterly destroyed, and that without remedy (b). And therefore, O thou immortal Creature, who art now reading these Lines, I beseech thee, that while Affairs are in this critical Situation, while there are these Balancings of Mind, between accepting and rejecting that glorious Gospel, which, in the Integrity of my Heart, I have now been laying be-E 6 fore

⁽a) Heb. iii. 23.

⁽b) Prov. xxix. 1.

fore you, you would once more give me an attentive Audience, while I plead in God's Behalf, (shall I say?) or rather in your own: While as an Embassador from Christ, and as though GOD did beseech you by me, I pray you in Christ's Stead, that you would be reconciled to GOD (c); and would not after these Awakenings and these Enquiries, by a Madness which it wilk surely be the doleful Business of a miserable Eternity to I ment, reject this comment.

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this compassionate Counsel of GOD towards you.

§. 2. ONE would indeed imagine, there should be no Need of Importunity here. One would conclude, that as foon as perishing Sinners are told, that an offended Gon is ready to be reconciled; that he offers them a full Pardon for all their aggravated Sins; yea, that he is willing to adopt them into his Family now, that he may at length admit them to his Heavenly Presence; all should with the utmost Readiness and Pleasure embrace so kind a Message, and fall at his Feet in speechless Transports of Astonishment, Gratitude and Joy. But alas, we find it much otherwise. We see Multitudes quite unmoved, and the Impressions which are made on many more, are feeble and transient. Lest it should be thus with you, O Reader, let me urge the Message with which I have the Honour to be charged: Let me intreat you to be reconciled to GOD, and to accept of Pardon and Salvation in the Way in which it is so freely offered to you.

§. 3. I INTREAT you, " by the Majesty of that GOD " in whose Name I come;" whose Voice fills all Heaven with Reverence and Obedience. He speaks not in vain, to Legions of Angels; but if there could be any Contention among those bleffed Spirits, it would be who should be first to execute his Commands. Olet him not speak in vain to a wretched Mortal! I intreat you, "by the Terrors of his Wrath," who could speak to you in I hunder; who could by one fingle Act of his Will, cut off this precarious Life of yours, and fend you down to Hell. I befeech you, " by His Mercies, by His " tender Mercies;" by the Bowels of his Compassion, which still yearn over you, as those of a Parent over a dear Sen, over a tender Child, whom notwithstanding his former ungrateful Rebellion, be carnestly remembers Aill Chap. 10. By the Laws of a dying Redeemer.

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fill (d). I befeech and intreat you, "by all this pater"nal Goodness," that you do not (as it were) compel
him to lose the Character of the gentle Parent, in that
of the righteous Judge; so that (as he threatens with
Regard to those whom he hath just called his Sons and
his Daughters;) a Fire shall be kindled in his Anger, which

should burn unto the lowest Hell (e).

6. 4. I BESEECH you farther, "by the Name and " Love of our dying Saviour." I befeech you, by all the Condescension of His Incarnation; by that Poverty to which he voluntarily submitted, that you might be inriched with Eternal Treasures (f); by all the gracious Invitations which he gave, which still found in his Word, and still coming (as it were) warm from his Heart, are fweeter than Honey or the Honey Comb (g). I befeech you, by all his glorious Works of Power and of Wonder, which were also Works of Love. I befeech you by the Memory of the most benevolent Person, and the most generous Friend. I beseech you, by the Memory of what he fuffered, as well as of what he faid and did; by the Agony which he endured in the Garden, when his Body was covered with a Dew of Blood (h). i befeech you, by all that tender Distress which he felt, when his dearest Friends for fook bim and fled (i), and his Bloodthirfly Enemies dragged him away, like the meanest of Slaves, and like the vilest of Criminals. I beseech you by the Blows and Bruises, by the Stripes and Lashes, which this injured Sovereign endured while in their rebellious Hands; by the Shame of Spitting, from which be bid not that kind and venerable Countenance (k). I befeech you, by the purple Robe, the Sceptre of Reed, and the Crown of Iborns, which this King of Glory wore, that he might fet us among the Princes of Heaven (1). I befeech you, by the heavy Burden of the Cross, under which he panted, and toiled, and fainted, in the painful Way to Golgotha (m), that he might free us from the Burden of our Sins. I beseech you, by the Remembrance of those rude Nails, that tore the Veins and Arteries, the Nerves and Tendons of his Sacred Hands and Feet:

(k) Ifai. 1. 6.

(f) 2 Cor. viii. 9.

⁽d) Jer. xxxi. 20. (g) Pfal. xix. 10.

⁽e) Deut. xxxii. 19. 22. (h) Luke xxii. 44. (l) Pfal. cxiii. 8.

⁽¹⁾ Matt. xxvi. 56 (m) John xix. 17.

(y) John xx. 27. (z) Acts ii. 33.

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⁽n) Luke xxii. 34. (o) John xii. 32, (p) Matt. xxvii. 29-44. (q) John xix. 28, 29. (r) Matt. xxvii. 46. (s) Luke xxiii. 42, 43. (l) John xix. 30. (u) Rom. i. 4. (x) John xx. 17.

Chap. 10. By the Regard that is due to others:

while injuring his Church, Saul, Saul, why perfecuteff thou me (a)? by that generous Goodness which spared that proftrate Enemy, when he lay trembling at his Feet, and raised him to so high a Dignity, as to be not inferior to the very chiefe,t Apostles (b). I befeech you by the Memory of all that Christ hath already done, by the Expectation of all he will farther do for his People. I befeech you, at once, by the Sceptre of his Grace, and by the Sword of his Juffice, with which all his incorrigible Enemies shall be flain before him (c), that you do not trifle away those precious Moments, while his Spirit is thus breathing upon you; that you do not lose an Opportunity which may never return, and on the

Improvement of which your Eternity depends.

5. 5. I BESEECH you, "by all the Bowels of Com-" paffion which you owe to the faithful Ministers of " Christ;" who are studying and labouring, preaching and praying, wearing out their Time, exhaulting their Strength, and very probably, shortening their Lives, for the Salvation of your Soul, and of Souls like yours. I befeech you, by the Affection, with which all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity, long to fee you brought back to him. I beseech you, by the Friendship of the Living, and by the Memory of the Dead; by the Ruin of those who have trifled away their Days; and are perished in their Sins, and by the Happiness of those who have embraced the Gospel, and are saved by it. I befeech you, by the great Expectation of that important Day, when the Lord Jefus shall be revealed from Heaven (d); by the Terrors of a diffolving World (e); by the Sound of the Arch Angel's Trumpet (f ; and of that infinitely more awful Sentence, Come, ye Bieffed, and Depart, ye Curfed, with which that grand Solemnity shall close (g).

§. 6. I BESEECH you finally, "by your own precious "and immortal Soul;" by the fure Prospect of a dying Bed, or of a sudden Surprize into the Invisible State; and as you would feel one Spark of Comfort in your departing Spirit, when your Flesh and your Heart are

(g) Matt. xxv. 34, 41.

failing (c) Luke xix. 27. (b) 2 Cor. xii. 11.

⁽a) Acts ix. 4. (1) 1 Theff. iv. 16. (d) 2 Theff. i. 7. (c) 2 Pet. 111. 10.

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(i) P (m)

I befeech you, by your own Personal Appearance before the Tribunal of Chrift, (for a Personal Appearance it must be, even to them who now sit on Thrones of their own;) by all the Transports of the Blessed, and by all the Agonies of the Damned, the one or the other of which must be your everlasting Portion. I affectionately intreat and befeech you, in the Strength of all thefe united Considerations, as you will answer it to me, who may in that Day be summoned to testify against you; and, which is unspeakably more, as you will answer it to your own Conscience, as you will answer it to the Eternal Judge; that you dismiss not these Thoughts, these Meditations, and these Cares, till you have brought Matters to a happy Issue; till you have made a resolute Choice of Christ, and his appointed Way of Salvation, and till you have folemnly devoted yourfelf to God in the Bonds of an everlasting Covenant.

§. 7. And thus I leave the Matter before you, and before the Lord. I have told you my Errand; I have discharged my Embassy. Stronger Arguments I cannot use; more endearing and more awful Considerations I cannot fuggest. Chase therefore, whether you will go out (asit were) clothed in Sackcloth, to cast yourfelt at the Feet of him who now fends you these equitable and gracious Terms of Peace and Pardon; or whether you will hold it out, till he appears Sword in Hand, to reckon with you for your Treasons and your Crimes, and for this neglected Embassy among the rest of them. Fain would I hope the best; nor can I believe, that this Labour of Love shall be so entirely unsuccessful, that not one Soul shall be brought to the Foot of Christ in cordial Submission and humble Faith. Take with you therefore Words, and turn unto the Lord (h); and Oh that those which follow might, in Effect at least, be the genuine Language of every one that reads them!

The Sinner yielding to these Intreaties, and declaring his Acceptance of Salvation by Christ.

BLESSED Lord, it is enough! It is too much! "Surely there needs not this Variety of Arguments

Chap 10. The Sinner yielding to these Intrenties.

ments, this Importunity of Persuasion, to court me " to be happy, to prevail upon me to accept of Pardon, " of Life, of Eternal Glory. Compassionate Saviour, " my Soul is subdued; so that I trust, the Language " of thy Grief is become that of my Penitence, and I " may fay, My Heart is melted like Wax in the Midf. of " my Bowels (i).

" O gracious Redeemer! I have already neglected " Thee too long. I have too often injured Thee; have " crucified Thee afrest by my Guilt and Impenitence, " as if I had taken Pleasure in putting Thee to an open " Shame (k). But my Heart now bows itself before " Thee, in humble unfeigned Submission. I defire to " make no Terms with thee but thefe, -that I may " be entirely Thine. I chearfully present Thee with a " Blank, intreating Thee, that thou wilt do me the " Honour to fignify upon it, what is thy Pleasure. " Teach me, O Lord, what then wouldft have me to " do! For I defire to learn the Leffon, and to learn it " that I may practife it. If it be more than my feeble, " Powers can answer, Thou wilt, I hope, give me " more Strength; and in that Strength I will ferve "Thee. O receive a Soul, which Thou hast made " willing to be thine!

" No more, O Bleffed Jesus, no more is it necessary " to befesch and intreat me. Permit me rather to ad-" dress myself to Thee, with all the Importunity of a " perishing Sinner, that at length, sees and knows, " there is Salvation in no other (1) ! Permit me now, " Lord, to come, and throw myfelf at thy Feet, like " a helples Outcast, that has no Shelter but in Thy " generous Compassion! like one pursued by the Aven-" ger of Blood, and feeking earnestly an Admittance

" into the City of Refuge (m) !

" I wait for the Lord! my Soul doth wait; and in "Thy Word do I hope (n), that Thou wilt receive me " graciously (o). My Soul confides in thy Goodness, and adores it. I adore the Patience, which has borne " with me fo long; and the Grace that now makes me " heartily willing to be Thine; to be Thine on Thine " own

⁽i) Pfal. x xii. 14. (n) Josh. x x 2, 3. (n) Psal. cxxx. 5.

⁽k) Heb. vi. 6.

⁽¹⁾ Acts iv. 12. (o) Hol, xiv. 2.

The Sinner willing to accept of Christ. Chap. 10.

'own Terms, Thine on any Terms. Oh secure this treacherous Heart to Thyself! Oh unite me to Thee in such inseparable Bonds, that none of the Allurements of Flesh and Blood, none of the Vanities of an insuring World, none of the Solicitations of sinful Companions, may draw me back from Thee, and plunge me into new Guilt and Ruin! Be Sarety, O Lord, for thy Servant for Good (p); that I may still keep my hold on Thee, and so on Evernal Life: till at length I know more fully, by joyful and everlasting Experience, how compleat a Saviour Thou art; Amen."

(p) Psal, exix 122.

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CHAP. XI.

A Solemn Address to those, who will not be persuaded to fall in with the Design of the Gospel.

Universal Success not to be expected: §. 1: Yet, as unwilling absolutely to give up any, the Author addresses (1.) To those who doubt of the Truth of Christianity, urging an Enquiry into its Evidences, and directing to proper Methods for that Purpose. S. 2,-4. (2.) To those who determine to give it up without farther Examination, . 5. And prefume to fet themselves to oppose it, 6. 6. (3.) To those who speculatively affent to Christianity as true, and yet will sit down without any practical Regard to its most important and acknowledged Truths. Such are dismissed with a Representation of the Absurdity of their Conduct on their own Principles ; §. 7. 8. With a folemn Warning of its fatal Consequences; §. 9, 10. And a Compassionate Prayer, (introduced. §. 11.) which concludes the Chapter, and this Part of the Work.

S. I. I WOULD humbly hope, that the preceding Chapters will be the Means of awakening some stupid and insensible Sinners; the Means of convincing them of their Need of Gospel-Salvation, and of engaging some cordially to accept it. Yet, I cannot flatter myself so far, as to hope this should be the Case with regard to all, into whose Hands this Book shall come. What am I, alas, better than my Fathers (a), or better than my Brethren, who have in all Ages been repeating their Complaint, with regard to Multitudes, that they have

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§ 2. So would I once more return to you. You do not find in yourself any Disposition to embrace the Gospel, to apply yourfelf to Chrift, to give yourfelf up to the Service of God, and to make Religion the Bufinels of your Life. But if I cannot prevail upon you to do this, let me engage you, at least, to answer me, or rather to answer your own Conscience, " Why you will not " do it?" Is it owing to any fecret Difbehef of the great Principles of Religion? If it be, the Cafe is different from what I have yet confidered, and the Cure mult be different. This is not a Place to combat with the Scruples of Infidelity. Nevertheless I would defire you feriously to enquire, " How far those Seruples extend." Do they affect only some particular Doctrines of the Gospel, on which my Argument hath turned; or do they affect the whole Christian Revelation? Or do they reach yet farther, and extend themselves to Natural Religion,

(b) Rom. x. 21.

ligion, as well as Revealed, fo that it should be a Doubt with you, Whether there be any GOD, and Providence. and Future State, or not? As these Cases are all different. fo it will be of great Importance to diftinguish the one from the other; that you may know, on what Principles to build as certain, in the Examination of those concerning which you are yet in Doubt. But whatever thefe Doubts are, I would further ask you, "How long have " they continued, and what Method have you taken to " get them resolved?" Do you imagine, that in Matters of such Moment, it will be an allowable Case for you to trifle on, neglecting to enquire into the Evidence of these Things, and then plead your not being fatisfied in that Evidence as an Excuse for not acting according to them? Must not the Principles of Common Sense affure you, that if these Things be true, (as when you talk of doubting about them, you acknowledge it, at least, possible they may,) they are of infinitely greater Importance than any of the Affairs of Life, whether of Buineis or Pleasure, for the Sake of which you neglect them? Why then do you continue indelent and unconcerned, from Week to Week, and from Month to Month, which probably Conscience tells you is the Case?

6. 3. Do you afk, " What Method you should take to " be resolved! " It is no hard Question. Open your Eyes: Set yourself to think: Let Conscience speak; and verily do I believe, that if it be not feared in an uncommon Degree, you will find shrewd Forebodings of the Certainty, both of Natural and Revealed Religion, and of the absolute Necessity of Repentance, Faith and Holiness, to a Life of future Felicity. If you are a Person of any Learning, you cannot but know, by what Writers, and in what Treatifes, these great Truths are defended. And if you are not, you may find, in almost every Town and Neighbourhood, Persons capable of informing you in the main Evidences of Christianity, and of answering such Scruples against it as unlearned Minds may have met with. Set yourfelf then, in the Name of God, immediately to confider the Matter. If you fludy at all, bend your Studies close this Way; and trifle not with Mathematicks, or Poetry, or History, or Law, or Phylick, (which are all comparatively light as a Feather,)

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Chap. 11.

while you neglect this. Study the Argument, as for your Life; for much more than Life depends on it. See how far you are fatisfied, and why that Satisfaction reaches no farther. Compare Evidences on both Sides. And above all, confider the Design and Tendency of the New Teffament. See to what it will lead you, and all them that cordially obey it; and then fay, whether it be not good. And confider, how naturally its Truth is connected with its Goodness. Trace the Character and Sentiments of its Authors, whose living Image (if I may be allowed the Expression,) is still preserved in their Writings. then, ask your own Hearts, Can you think this was a Forgery? an impious cruel Forgery? For such it must have been, if it were a Forgery at all; a Scheme to mock God, and to ruin Men, even the best of Men, fuch as reverenced Conscience, and would abide all Extremities for what they apprehended to be Truth. Put the Queltion to your own Heart, Can I in my Conscience believe it to be such an Imposture? Can I look up to an Omniscient GOD, and fay, "O Lord, Thou knowest, that " it is in Reverence to Thee, and in Love to Truth and " Virtue, that I reject this Book, and the Method to

" Happiness here laid down?"

§. 4. Bur there are Difficulties in the Way. - And what then? Have those Difficulties never been cleared? Go to the living Advocates for Christianity, to those of whose Abilities, Candor, and Piety, you have the best Opinion; if your Prejudices will give you Leave to have a good Opinion of any fuch : Tell them your Difficulties: Hear their Solutions: Weigh them feriously, as those who know they must answer it to GoD: And while Doubts continue, follow the Truth as far as it will lead you, and take Heed that you do not imprison it in Uurighteoujness (d). Nothing appears more inconfishent and absurd, than for a Man solemnly to pretend Dissatisfac. tion in the Evidences of the Gospel, as a Reason why he cannot in Conscience be a thorough Christian ; when yet at the same Time he violates the most apparent Dictates of Reason and Conscience, and lives in Vices condemned even by the Heathens. O Sirs, Christ has judged concerning such, and judged most righteously and most

Chap. 11. The Madness of such as dere to oppose it.

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wifely; They do Evil, and therefore they hate the Light, neither come they to the Light, lest their Deeds should be made manifest, and be reproved (e). But there is a Light, that will make manifest and reprove their Works, to which they shall be compelled to come, and the painful Scrutiny of which they shall be forced to shide

which they shall be forced to abide.

§ 5. In the mean Time, if you are determined to enquire no farther into the Matter now, give me Leave at least, from a fincere Concern, that you may not heap upon your Head more aggravated Ruin, to intreat you. that you would be cautious how you expose yourself to yet greater Langer, by what you must yourself own to be unnecessary, I mean Attempts to prevent others from believing the Truth of the Goffel. Leave them, for Goo's Sake, and for your own, in Possession of those Pleasures, and those Hopes, which nothing but Christianity can give them; and act not, as if you were folicitous to add to the Guilt of an Infidel the tenfold Damnation, which they, who have been the Perverters and Destroyers of the Souls of others, must expect to meet, if that Gospel which they have to adventurously opposed shall prove, as it certainly will, a ferious, and to them a dreadful Truth.

§. 6. If I cannot prevail here, but the Pride of difplaying a Superiority of Understanding should bear on such a Reader, even in Opposition to his own favourite Maxims of the Innocence of Error, and the Equality of all Religions confishent with focial Virtue, to do his utmost to trample down the Gospel with Contempt; I would however dismiss him with one Proposal, which I think the Importance of the Affair may fully justify. If you have done with your Examination into Christianity, and determine to live and conduct yourfelf as if it were affuredly falle, fit down then, and make a Memorandum of that Determination. Write it down: "On such a Day of " such a Year, I deliberately resolved, that I would live " and die rejecting Christianity myself, and doing all I " could to overthrow it. This Day I determined, not " only to renounce all Subjection to, and Expectation " from, Jesus of Nazareth; but also to make it a feri-

Chap tian ; who fubj: Savi turn but thou Him Eter WILL 2000 your excu had alier the Del Loni 2ppr ter c a gr Beir love Con ly re ther beca dem be c Goi feek fes ! bim grea thou 2 de Life ter : Ligh ther

" as I possibly can, all Regard to him in the Minds of others, and to exert my most vigorous Efforts, in the " Way of Reasoning or of Ridicule, to sink the Credit of his Religion, and if it be possible to root it out of "the World; in calm steady Defiance of that Day, " when his Followers fay, He shall appear in so much " Majesty and Terror to execute the Vengeance threat-" ened to his Enemies." Dare you write this, and fign it? I firmly believe, that many a Man, who would be thought a Deift, and endeavours to increase the Number, would not. And if you in particular dare not to do it, whence does that small Remainder of Caution arise? The Cause is plain. There is in your Conscience some secret Apprehension, that this rejected, this opposed, this derided Gofpel, may after all prove true. And if there be such an Apprehension, then let Conscience do its Office, and convict you of the impious Madness of acting, as if it were most certainly and demonstrably false. Let it tell you at large, how possible it is that haply you may be found fighting against GOD (f): That, bold as you are in defying the Terrors of the Lord, you may possibly fall into his Hands; may chance to hear that despised Sentence, which when you hear it from the Mouth of the Eternal ludge, you will not be able to despise: I will repeat it again, in Spite of all your Scorn, you may bear the King fay to you, Depart accurfed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels (g). And now, go and pervert and burlefque the Scripture, go and lampoon the Character of its Heroes, and ridicule the sublime Discourses of its Prophets and its Apostles; as some have done, who have lest little behind them but the short lived Monuments of their lgnorance, their Profaneness, and their Malice. Go and spread like them the Banners of Infidelity, and pride thyself in the Number of credulous Creatures listed under them, But take Heed, left the infulted Galilean direct a secret Arrow to thine Heart, and stop thy licentious Breath, before it has finished the next Sentence thou wouldst utter against him.

6. 7. I WILL turn mytelf from the Deift or the Sceptic, and direct my Address to the Nominal Chris-

for

tian; if he may upon any Terms be called a Christian, who feels not, after all I have pleaded, a Disposition to Subject himself to the Government and the Grace of that Saviour, whose Name he bears. O Sinner, thou art turning away from my Lord, in whose Cause I speak; but let me earnestly intreat thee seriously to consider, why thou art turning away, and to whom thou wilt ge, from Him, whom thou acknowledgest to have the Words of Eternal Life (n). You call yourfelf a Christian, and yet will not by any Means be perfunded to feek Salvation in good Earnest from and thro' Jefus Chrift, whom you call your Master and Lord. How do you for a Moment excuse this Negligence to your own Conscience? If I had urged you on any controverted Point, it might have shered the Cafe. If I had laboured hard to make you the Disciple of any particular Party of Christians, your Delay might have been more reasonable: Nay, perhaps, your refusing to acquiesce might have been an Act of apprehended Duty to our common Mafter. But is it Matter of Controversy amongst Christians, whether there be a great, holy, and righteous Gop; and whether fuch a Being, whom we agree to own, should be reverenced and loved, or neglected and dishonoured? Is it Matter of Controversy, whether a Sinner should deeply and seriously repent of his Sins, or whether he should go on in them ?- Is it a disputed Point amongst us, whether Jejus became incarnate, and died upon the Cross, for the Rcdemption of Sinners, or no? And if it be not, can it be disputed by them who believe him to be the Son of Gon and the Saviour of Men, whether a Sinner should feek to him, or neglect him? or whether one who profesles to be a Christian, should depart from Iniquity, or give himself up to the Practice of it? Are the Precepts of our great Matter written so obscurely in his Word, that there thould be Room feriously to question; whether he require a devout, holy, humble, spiritual, watchful, felf-denying Life, or whether he allow the contrary? Has Christ after all his pretentions of bringing Life and Immortality to Light, left it more uncertain than he found it, whether there be any future State of Happiness and Milery, or for whom these States are respectively intended? Is it a Matter

§ 8 In this Cafe I tee not what it can fignify, to renew those exposiulations and Addresses which I have made in the former Chapters. As our olefied Reneemer fays, of those who rejected his Guipel, Ye have both fren and bated both me and my Father (0); to may I truly fay with regard to you, I have enceavoured to Sherv you in the plainest and the clearest Words, both Christ and the Father; I have urged the Obligations you are under to both; I have said before you your Guilt, and your Condemnation; I have pointed out the only Remedy; I have pointed out the Rock, on which I have built my own Eleinal Hopes, and the Way in which alone I expect Salvation. I have recommended those I hings to you, which, if God gives me an Opportunity, I will with my dying Breath earnestly and atfectionately

(i) Eccles. xii. 14. (n.) John v. 40. (k) Matt. xxv. 46.

(1) Rom. viii. 7. (0) John sv. 34. Ch

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§. 9. Seek what Amusements and Entertainments thou wilt, O. Sinner, I tell thee, if thou wert equal in Dignity, and Power, and Magniscence, to the great Monarch of Babylon, Thy Pomp shall be brought down to the Grave, and all the Sound of thy Viols; the Worm shall be spread under thee, and the Worm shall cover thee (t), Yes, Sinner, the End of these Things is Death (u); Death in its most terrible Sense to thee, if this continue

⁽p) Exod. xi. 4,—6. (q) Ezek. ii. 7. (r) Ifai. xxxiv. 5. (s) Acts xviii. 6. (1) Ifai. xiv. 21. (u) Rom. vi. 21.

His Cafe will be dreadful at Death. Chap. 11. 104 thy governing Temper. Thou can't avoid it; and, if it be possible for any Thing that I can fay to prevent, thou shalt not forget it. Your Strength is not the Strength of Stones, nor is your Flesh of Bross (x). Your are accessible to Difeases, as well as others; and if some sudden Accident do not prevent it, we shall soon see, how heroically you will behave yourfelf on a dying Bed, and in the near Views of Evernity. You, that now despise Christ, and triffe with his Gospel, we shall see you droop and languish; shall see all your Relish for your carnal Recreations, and your vain Companions loft. And if perhaps, one and another of them bolt in upon you, and is brutish and desperate enough to attempt to entertain a dying Man with a gav Story, or a profane lett, we shall see how you will reich it. We shall see, what Comfort you will have in reflecting on what is past, or what Hope in looking forward to what is to come. Ferhaps trembling and aftonished, you will then be enquiring in a wild Kind of Confe nation, what you should no to be faved : cling for the Ministers of Christ, whom you now despite for the Larnelinels with which they would labour to fave your coul; and it may be falling into a Delirium, or dying Convu fions, before they can come. Or perhaps we may see you, flattering yourfelf, thro' a long lingering Illness, that you shall still recover, and putting off any ferious Reflection and Convertation, for fear it should overfet your Spirits. And the cruel Kindness of Friends and Physicians, as if they were in League with Satan to make the Destruction of your Soul as ture as possible, may perhaps aber this fatal Deceit.

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that is, in thort, unlets a Miracle of Grace snatch you as a Brand out of the Burning, when the Flames have as it were already taken hold of you; all these gloomy Circumstances, which passinto the Chambers of Illness and the Bed of Death, are but the Fore-runners of infinitely more dreadful Things. Oh, who can describe them! Who can imagine them! When surviving Friends are tenderly mourning over the breathless Corple, and taking a fond Farewell of it before it is laid to consume away in the dark and silent Grave, into what Hands, O Sinner,

(x) Job vi. 12.

will thy Soul be fallen! What Scenes will open upon thy separate Spirit, even before thy deserted Flesh be cold, or thy fightless Eyes are closed! It shall then know, what it is to return to GOD to be rejected by him, as having rejected his Gospel and his Son, and despised the only Treaty of Reconciliation; and that fuch a one, fo amazingly condescending and gracious. Thou shalt know, what it is to be disowned by Christ whom thou hast refused to entertain; and what it is, as the certain and immediate Consequence of that, to be left in the Hands of the malignant Spirits of Hell. There will be no more Friendship then: None to comfort, none to alleviate thy Agony and Diffress: But, on the contrary, all around thee la ouring to aggravate and increase them. Thou shalt pals away the intermediate Years of the separate State, in dreadful Expectation, and bitter Outcries of Horror and Remorfe. And then, thou shalt hear the Trumpet of the Arch Angel, in whatever Cavern of that gloomy World thou art lodged. Its Sound shall penetrate thy Prison, where, doleful and horrible as it is, thou shalt nevertheless wish, that thou mightest still be allowed to hide thy guilty Head, rather than shew it before the Face of that awful Judge, before whom Heaven and Earth are fleeing away (y) But thou must come forth, and be re-united to a Body, now formed for ever to endure Agonies, which in this Mortal State would have dissolved it in a Moment. You would not be persua-ded to come to Christ before: You would supidly neglect bim, in Spite of Reason, in Spite of Conscience, in spite of all the tenderest Solicitations of the Gospel, and the repeated Admonitions of its most faithful Ministers. But now, Sinner, you shall have an Interview with him; if that may be called an Interview, in which you will not dare to lift up your Head to view the Face of your tremendous and inexorable Judge. There at least, how distant sever the Time of our Life and the Place of our abode may have been, there shall we see how courageously your Heart will endure, and how strong your Hands will be, when the Lord doth this (z). There shall I fee hee, O Reader, whoever thou art that goest on in thine Impenitency, among Thousands and Ten Thou-

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fands of despairing Wretches, trembling and confounded. There shall I hear thy Cries among the rest, rending the very Heavens in vain. The Judge will rife from his Tribunal with Majestic Composure, and leave thee to be hurried down to those Everlasting Burnings, to which his righteous Vengeance hath doomed thee, because thou wouldst not be saved from them, Hell shallthat its Mouth upon thee for ever, and the fad Echo of thy Greans and Outcries shall be lost amidst the Hallelujahs of Heaven to all that find Mercy of the Lord in that

6. 11. This will most affuredly be the End of thefe Things: And thou, as a Christian, professeth to know, and to believe it. It moves my Heart at least, if it moves not thine. I famly believe, that every one, who himself obtains Salvation and Glory, will bear so much of his Saviour's Image in Wisdom and Goodness, in Zeal for God, and a steady Regard to the Happiness of the whole Creation, that he will behold this fad Scene with calm Approbation, and without any paintul Commotion of Mind. But as yet I am Flesh and Blood; and therefore, my Bowel are troubled, and mine eyes often overflow with Grief, to think that wretched Sinners will have no more Compassion upon their own Souls; to think, that in Spite of all Admonition, they will obstinately run upon final Everlasting Destruction. It would fignify nothing here to add a Prayer, or Meditation, for your Use. Poor Creature, you will not meditate! you will not pray! Yet as I have often poured out my Heart in Prayer over a dying Friend, when the Force of his Distemper has rendered him incapable of joining with me; fo I will now apply myself to Gon for you, O unhappy Cr ata es! And if you disdain so much as to read what my compassion dictates; yet I hope, they who have felt the Power of the Gospel on their own Souls, as they cannot but pity fuch as you, will join with me in fuch cordial, tho' broken Petitions, as thefe.

APRAYER in Behalf of an Impenitent Sinner, in the Cafe described above.

LMIGHTY GOD! with Thee all Things A ware possible (a): To Thee therefore do I hum-" bly apply myself in Behalf of this dear Immortal Soul, " which Thou here feest perishing in its Sins, and har-" dening itself against that everlaiting Gospel, which has " been the Power of GOD to the Salvation of fo many " Thousands and Millions. Thou art Witness, O Bles-" fed Gop, Thou art Witness to the Plainness and Se-" riousness, with which the Message has been delivered. " It is in Thy Presence that these awful Words have " been written ; and in Thy Presence have they been " read. Be pleased therefore to record it in the Book " of thy Remembrance, that fo if this wicked Man dieth " in his Iniquity, after the Warning has been so plainly " and folemnty given him, his Blood may not be required " at my Hand(b), nor at the Hand of that Cariffian " Friend, whoever he is, by whom this Book has been " put into his, with a fincere Defire for the Salvation " of his Soul. Be Witness, O blessed Jesus, in the " Day in rob ch Thou shalt judge the Secret of all Hearts " (c), that Thy Gospel hath been preached to this " hardened Wretch, and Salvation by Thy Blood hath " been offered him, tho' he continue to despise it. And " may thy unworthy Messenger be unto GOD a fiveet " Savour in Christ, in this very Soul, even tho' it should " at last periff d)!

"But, On that, after all his Hardness and Impenitence, Thou wouldst still be pleased, by the Sovereign
Power of Thine efficacious Grace, to awaken and convert him! Well do we know, On, Thou Lord of
universal Nature, that, He who made the Soul, can cause
the Sword of Convession to come near a denter into
it. On that, in Thine Infinite Wildom and Love,
Thou wouldst find out a Way to interpose, and save
this Sinner from Death, from eternal Death! Oh
that, if it be Thy biessed Will, Thou wouldst immef a diately

(a) Matt. xix. 26. (b) Ezek. xxxiii. 8, 9. (c) Rom. iii. 169 (d) 2 Cor. 11. 15.

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" diately do it : Thou knowest, O Goo, he is a dying " Creature: Thou knowest, that if any Thing be done " for him, it must be done quickly: Thou feest, in the " Book of Thy wife and gracious Decrees, a Moment " marked, which must seal him up in an unchangeable State: Oh that thou wouldst lay hold on him, while " he is yet joined with the Living, and bath Hope (e)! " Thy immutable Laws in the Dispensation of Grace " forbid, that a Soul should be converted and renewed after its Entrance on the Invisible World : Olet Thy " Sacred Spirit work, while he is yet as it were within " the fphere of his Operations! Work, O Gon, by " whatever Method thou pleasest; only have Mercy " upon him! O. Lord, have Mercy upon him, that he " fink not into these Depths of Damnation and Ruin, " on the very Brink of which he fo evidently appears! Oh that Thou wouldst bring him, if that be neces-" fary, and feem to thee most expedient, in any Depths " of Calamity and Diffress! Oh that, with Manaffeb, he may be taken in the Thorns, and laden with the Fet-" ters of Affliction, if that may but cause him to feek the " GOD of bis Fathers (f).

"Eut I prescribe not to Thine Infinite Wissom, "Thou hast displayed thy Power in glorious and alternishing Instances; which I thank Thee, that I have so circumstantially known, and by the Knowledge of them have been fortified against the rast Considence of those who weakly and arrogantly pronounce that to be inpessible, swhich is actually done. Thou hast, I know, done that by a single Thought in Retirement, when the happy Man reclaimed by it hath been far from Means, and far from Ordinances, which neither the most awful Admonitions, nor the most tender Intreaties, nor the most terrible Afsiletions, nor the most

" wonderful Deliverances had been able to effect.

"Glerify thy Name, O Lord, and glorify Thy Grace

in the Method which to thine infinite Wisdom shall
feem most expedient! Only grant, I befeech Thee,
with all humble Submission to thy Will, that this
Sinner may be faved! or if not, that the Labour of
this Part may not be altogether in vain; but that if

^() Eccles. ix. 4. (f) 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11, 12.

fome reject it to their aggravated Ruin, others may hearken and live! That those Thy Servants, who have laboured for their Deliverance and Happiness, may view them in the Regions of Glory, as the Spoils with which thou hast honoured them as the Instruments of recovering; and may join with them in the Hallelujahs of Heaven to Him, who hath loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood, and bath made us, of condemned Rebels, and accurred polluted Sinners, Kings and Priess unto GOD; to Him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever! Amen (g)."

(g) Rev. i. 5, 6

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CHAP. XII.

An Address to a Soul so overwhelmed with a Sense of the Greatness of its Sins, that it dares not apply itself to Christ with any Hope of Salvation.

The Case described at large, §. 1,—4. As it frequently occurs, §. 5. Granting all that the dejected Soul charges on itself, § 6. The Invitations and Promises of Christ give Hope, § 7. The Reader urged, un er all bis Burthens and Fears, to an hamble Application to Him: § 8. Which is accordingly exemplified in the concluding Resection and Prayer.

4. I. HAVE now done with those unhappy Creatures who despise the Gospel, and with those who neglect it. With Pleasure do I now turn myself to those, who will hear me with more Regard. Among the various Cases, which now present themselves to my Thoughts, and demand my tender, affectionate, respectful Care, there is none more worthy of Compassion, than that which I have mentioned in the Title of this Chapter; none which requires a more immediate Attempt of Relief.

§. 2, It is very possible some afslicted Creature may be ready to cry out, "It is enough: Aggravate my

"Grief, and my Distress, no more. The Sentence you have been so awfully describing, as what shall be

" passed and executed on the Impenitent and Unbelieve ing, is my Sentence; and the Terrors of it are my Terrors.

For mine Iniquities have gone up into the Heavens, and

way Transgressions have reached unto the Clouds (2).

Chap. 12. oversubelmed with a Sonfe of its Sins.

III

" My Cafe is quite fingular. Surely there never was fo e great a Sinner as I I have received fo many Mercies, " have enjoyed to many Advantages, I have heard to " many Invitations of Gospel Grace; and yet my Heart " has been so hard, and my Nature is so exceeding sin-. ful, and the Number and aggravating Circumstances " of my Provocations have been such, that I dare not " bore. It is enough, that God hath supported me thus long; it is enough, that after so many Years of " Wickedness, I am yet out of Hell. Every Day's Re-" prieve is a Mercy, at which I am aftonished. I lie " down, and wonder that Death and Damnation have " not leized me in my Walks the Day past. I arise,. " and wonder, that my Bed hath not been my Grave; " wonder, that my Soul is not separated from Flesh, " and furrounded with Devils and damned Spirits.

6. 3. " I HAVE indeed heard the M-stage of Salva-" tion; but alas, it feems no M stage of Salvation to " me. There are happy Souls that have Hope; and their Hope is indeed in Christ, and the Grace of God " manifested in him But then they feel in their Hearts " an Encouragement to apply to him, whereas I dare " not do it. Christ and Grace are Things, in which, I " fear, I have no Part, and must expect none. There " are exceeding rich and precious Promiles in the Word of Gon; but they are to me as a fealed Book, and " are hid from me as to any personal Use. I know, " Christ is able to save: I know he is willing to save " some But that he should be willing to fave me, such " a polluted, fuch a provoking Creature, as God knows " and as Confcience knows, I have been, and to this "Day am; this I know not how to believe: And the " utmost that I can do towards believing it, is to ac-" knowledge that it is not absolutely impossible, and " that I do not yet lie down in complete Despair ; tho' " alas, I feem upon the very Borders of it; and expect " every Day and Hour to fall into it."

§. 4. I SHOULD not perhaps have entered fo fully into this Cale, it I had not feen many in it; and I will add. Reader, for your Encouragement, it it be your Cale, several who now are in the Number of the most established, chearful, and useful Christians. And I

hope, Divine Grace will add you to the rest, if out of these Depths, you be enabled to cry unto GOD (b); and tho, like Jonah, you may feem to be cast out from his Presence, yet still, with Jonah, you look towards his boly Temple (c).

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§ . 5. LET it not be imagined, that it is in any Neglect of that Bieffed Spirit, whose Office it is to be the great Comforter, that I now attempt to reason you out of this disconsolate Frame; for it is as the great Source of Reason, that he deals with rational Creatures; and it is in the Use of Rational Means and Considerations, that He may most justly be expected to operate. Give me Leave, therefore, to address myself calmly to you, and to ask you, What Reason you have for all these passionate Complaints and Accusations against yourself? What Reason have you to suggest, that your Case is fingular, when fo many have told you, they have felt the same? What Reason have you to conclude so hardly against yourself, when the Gospel speaks in such favourable Terms? Or what Reason to imagine, that the gracious Things it fays are not intended for you? You know indeed more of the Corruptions of your own Heart, than you know of the Hearts of others; and you make a Thousand charitable Excuses for their visible Failings and Infirmities, which you make not for your own. And it may be, some of those, whom you admire as eminent Saints when compared with you, are on their Part humbling themselves in the Dutt as unworthy to be numbered amongst the least of Gon's People, and wishing themselves like you, in whom they think they fee much more Good, and much less of Evil, than in themselves.

s. 6. But to suppose the worst, What if you were really the vilest Sinner that ever lived on the Face of the Earth? What if your Iniquities had gone up unto the Heavens every Day, and your Transgressions had reached unto the Clouds (d); reached thither with such horrid Aggravations, that Earth and Heaven should have had Reason to detest you, as a Monster of Impiety? Admitting all this, Is any Thing too hard for the Lord (e)? Are

⁽b) Pfal. cx x x. 1, (c) Jonah ii: 4. (d) Rev. xviii. 5: le Gen. xviii. 14.

Chap. 12. get Chrit encourages to come to Him. 112 any Sins, of which a Sinner can repent, of fo deep a Dye, that the Blood of Christ cannot wash them away? Nav. tho' it would be daring Wickedness and monstrous Folly, for any to Sin that Grace may abound (f), yet had you indeed raifed your Account beyond all that Divine Grace has ever yet pardoned, who should limit the Holy One of Ijrael (g)? or who should pretend to say, that it was impossible that God might for your very Wretchedness chuse you out from others, to make you a Monument of Mercy, and a Trophy of hitherto unperalleled Grace? The Apostle Paul strongly intimates. this to have been the Cafe, with regard to himself: And why might not you likewife, if indeed the Chief of Suners, obtain Mercy, that in you, as the Chief, Jefus Christ might few forth all Long-Suffering, for a Pattern to them auto fall bereafter believe (a).

§. 7. GLOOMY as your Apprehensions are, I would ask you plainly, Do you in your Conscience think, that Christ is not able to fave you? What, is He not able to fave even to the uttermost, them that come unto GOD by bim (i) ? Yes, you will fay abundantly able to do it; but I dare not imagine, that he will do it. And how do you know that he will not? He has helped the very greatest Sinners of all that have yet applied themselves to him: And he has made the Offers of Grace and Salvation in the most engaging and encouraging Terms: If any Man thirst, let bim come unto me and drink (k): Let him that is athirft, come; and who foever will, let him take of the Water of Life freely (1): Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you Reft (m): And once more, Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wife cast out (n). True, will you say, None that are given him by the Father: Could I know I were of that Number, I could then apply chearfully to him. But, dear Reader, let me intreat you to look into the Text itself, and see whether that Limitation be expressly added there. Do you there read, None of them whom the Father bath given me, shall be cast, out? The Words are in a much-more encouraging Form: And why

⁽¹⁾ Rom. vi. 1.

⁽g) Pfal. lxxvii. 41. (k) John vii. 37.

⁽h) 1 Tim. i, 15, 16.

⁽m) Matt. xi. 28. (n) John vi. 37.

§ 8. In therefore, you are already discouraged and terrified at the Greatness of your Sins, do not add to their Weight and Number that one greater and worfe than all the refl, a Distrust of the Faithfulness and Grace of the bleffed Reieemer. Do not, fo far as in you lies, oppose all the Purposes of his Love to you. O diffressed Soul, whom don thou dread? To whom doll thou tremble to approach? Is here any I hing for terrible in a crucified Redeemer, in the Lamb that was flain? If thou car ied thy Soul, almost finking under the Borden of its Guilt, to lay it down at his Feet, what doit thou offer him, but the Spoil which he bled and died to recover and posses? And did he purchase it so dearly, that he might reject it with Disdain? Go to him directly, and fall down in his Presence, and plead that Milery of thine, which thou half now been pleading in a contrary View, as an Engagement to your own Soul to make the Application, and as an Argument with the Compassionate Saviour to receive you. Go, and be assu ed, that where Sin beth abounded, there Grace shall mu. b more abound (p). Be affured, that if one Sinner ca promite himfelf a more certain Welcome than another, it is not he that is least guilty and miterable, but he that is most deeply humbled before Gon under a Sense of that Milery and Guilt, and lies the lowest in the Apprehension of it.

() Prov. x x x . 6.

(p) Rom. v. 20.

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REFLECTIONS on these Encouragements, ending in an bumble and earnest Application to Christ for mercy.

"Is there not at least a Possibility of Help from Christ? And is there a Possibility of Help from Way? Is any other Name given under Heaven, whereby noe can be faved? I know, there is none (q). I must then say, like the Lepers of Grael (r), If I sit here, I prish; and if I make my Application in vain, I can but aie. But peradventure, He may save my Soul alive. I will therefore arise, and go unto Him; or rather, believing him here, by his Spiritual Presence, sinful and miserable as I am, I will this Moment fall down on my Face before him, and pour out my Soul unto Him.

Bleffed Jelus, I present myself unto. Thee, as a " wretched Creature, driven indeed by Necessity to do " it For furely were not that Necessity urgent and " absolute, I should not dare for very Shame to appear " in Thine Holy and Majestic Presence. I am fully " convinced, that my Sins and my Follies have been " inexcufably great; more than I can express, more " than I can conceive. I feel a Source of Sin, in my " corrupt and degenerate Nature, which pours out Ini-" quity, as a F untain fends out its Water, and makes " me a Burthen and a Terror to myfeif. Such Aggra-" vations have attended my Transgressions, that it " looks like Presumption, so much as to ask Pardon for " them. And yet, would it not be greater Prelump-" tion to fay, that they exceed thy Mircy, and the Ef-" ficacy of thy Blood; to fay, that thou haft Power and " Grace enough to pardon and fave only Sinners of a " lower Order, while such as I lie out of thy Reach? er Preferve me from that blasphemous Imagination! " Preferve me from that unreasonable Suspicion! Lord, " Thou canst do all Ibings, neither is there any Thought " of mine Heart with bolaen from Thee (s). Thou art " indeed, as Thy Word declares, able to fave unto the

⁽q) Acts iv. 12. (r) 2 Kings vii. 4. (s) Job. xlii. 2.

The Soul humbly applies to Christ, Chap. 12. " uttermost (t). And therefore, breaking thro' all the " Oppositions of Shame and Pear, that would keep me " from Thee, I come and lie down as in the Dust be-" fore Thee. Thou knowest, O Lord, all my Sins, and " all my Follies (u). I cannot, and I hope I may fay, I " would not, disguise them before Thee, or set myself " to find ont plaufible Excuses. Accuse me, Lord, as " thou pleafest: and I will ingenuously plead guilty to " all Thine Accusations. I will own myself as great a " Sinner, as Thou callest me : But I am still a Sinner, " that comes unto Thee for Pardon. If I must die, it " shall be submitting, and owning the Justice of the fa-" tal Stroke. If I perish, it shall be, laying hold, as it " were on the Horns of the Altar; laying myself down " at Thy Foot-flool, tho' I have been fuch a Rebel " against Thy Throne. Many have received a full " Pardon there; have met with Favour even beyond " their Hopes. And are all thy Compassions, O Blessed " Jesus, exhausted? And wilt thou now begin to re-" ject an humble Creature, who flies to thee for Life, " and pleads nothing but Mercy and Free Grace? Have " Mercy upon me, O most gracious Redeemer, bave Mercy " upon me, and let my Life be precious in thy Sight (x)! " Oh do not resolve to send me down to that State of " final Mifery and Despair, from which it was Thy ". gracious Purpose to deliver and save so many ! " Spurn me not away, O Lord, from thy Piesence, " nor be offended when I prefume to lay hold on Thy " Royal Robe, and fay that I cannot and will not let " Thee go, till my Suit is granted (y)! Oh remember, " that all my Hopes of obtaining eternal Happiness, " and avoiding everlasting, helpless, hopeless Destruc-" tion, are anchored upon Thee; They hang upon Thy " Smiles, or diop at Thy Frown. Oh bave Mercy " upon me, for the Sake of this immortal Soul of mine! " Or if not for the Sake of mine alone, for the Sake of " many others, who may, on the one Hand be encou-" raged by Thy Mercy to me, or on the other, may be " greatly wounded and discouraged by my helpless " Despair! I beseech Thee, O Lord, for thine own " Sake, (t) Heb. vii. 25. (u) Pfal. lxix 5. (x) 2 Kings i. 14.

(y) Gen. xxxii, 26.

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" Sake, and for the Display of thy Father's rich and " fovereign Grace !- I beseech Thee by the Blood Thou " didth shed on the Cross; I beseech thee by the Co-" venant of Grace and Peace, into which the Father " did enter with Thee for the Salvation of believing " and repenting Sinners, fave me! Save me, O Lord. " who earnestly desire to repent and believe! I am in-" deed a Sinner, in whose final and everlatting De-"Aruction Thy Justice might be greatly glorised: But Oh! if Thou wilt pardon me, it will be a Mo-" nument raised to the Honour of Thy Grace, and the " Efficacy of Thy Blood, in Proportion to the Degree " in which the Wreich, to whom thy Mercy is ex-" tended, was mean and miserable without it. Speak " Lord, by thy Bleffed Spirit, and banish my Fears! " Look unto me with Love and G ace in thy Coun-" tenance, and fay to me, as in the D ys of thy Flesh "Thou didit to many an humble Supplicant, Thy Sine " are forgiven Thee, go in Peace !"

CHAP. XIII.

The doubting Soul more particularly affifted in its Enquiries as to the Sincerity of its Faith and Repentance.

Transfent Impressions liable to be mistaken for Conversion, which would be a fatal Error, §. 1, General Schemes for Self-Examination, §. 2. Particular Enquiries; (1.) What Views there have been of Sin? § 3. (2.) What Views there have been of Christ? §, 4. As to the Need the Soul has of Him; §, 5. And is Willingness to receive Him, with a due Sur ender of Heart to His Service, § 6. Nothing short of this, Session, §, 7. The Soul submitting to divine Examination, the Sincerity of its Faith and Repentance.

5. 1. IN Consequence of all the serious Things, which A have been taid in the former Chapters, I hope it will be no fatte Presumption to imagine, that some ! eligious Impressions may be made on Hearts which had never felt them before; or may be revived, where they have formerly grown cold and languid. Yet I am very fenfible, and I defire that you may be to, how great Danger there is in elf-Flattery on this important Head; and how necessary it is to caution Men, against too halty a Conclusion that they are really converted, because they have felt some warm Emotions on their Minds, and have reformed the grots Irregularities of their for ner Conduct. A Mitake here might be infinitely fatal: It may prove the Occasion of that false Peace, which thail lead a M n to blfs bimfelf in bis own Heart, and to conclude himself secure, while all the Threatenings and Curjes of GOD's Law are founding in his Ears, and lie indeed directly app no Wi one ing fill Ca

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directly against bim (a): While in the mean Time he applies to himself a thousand Promises in which he has no Share; which may prove therefore like generous Wine to a Man in an high Fever, or firing Opiates to one in a Lethargy. The Stony Ground received the Word with Joy, and a promising Harvest seemed to be springing up; yet it foon withered away (b), and no Reaper filled his Arms with it. Now that this may not be the Case with you, that all my Labours and yours hitherto may not be loft, and that a vain Dream of Security and Happiness may not plunge you deeper in Misery and Ruin, give me Leave to lead you into a ferious Enquiry into your own Heart; that to you may be better able to judge of your Cafe, and to diltinguish between what is at most being only near the Kingdom of Heaven, and becoming indeed a Member of it.

6. 2. Now this depends upon the Sincerity of your Faith in Christ, when Faith is taken in the largest Extent, as explained above; that is, as comprehending Repentance, and that fleady Purpose of new and universal Obedience, of which, wherever it is real, Faith will affuredly be the vital Principle. Therefore to affift you in judging of your State, give me Leave to ask you, or rather to intreat you to alk yourfelt, What Views you have had, and now have, of Sin, and of Christ? And what your future Purpojes are, with Regard to your Conduct in the Remainder of Life that may lie before you? I shall not reason largely upon the several Particulars I suggest under those Heads, but rather refer you to your own Reading and Observation, to judge how agreeable they are to the Word of God, the great Rule by which our Characters must quickly be tried, and our Eternal

§. 3. ENQUIRE seriously, in the first Place, What Victor you have had of Sin, and what Sentiments you have selt in your Soul with Regard to it: There was a Time, when it wors a flattering Aspect, and made a fair inchanting Appearance. So that all your Heart was

inchanting Appearance, fo that all your Heart was charmed with it, and it was the very Bufiness of your Life to practife it. But you have fince been undeceived.

State unalterably determined.

It should enquire into its View of Sin. Chap. 13. You have felt it bite like a Scrient, and fling like an Adder (c). You have beheld it with an Abhorrence, far greater than the Delight which it ever gave you. So far it is well. It is thus with every true Penitent, and with some I fear, who are not of that Number. Let me therefore enquire further. Whence arose this Abhorrence? Was it merely from a Principle of Self-Love? Was it merely because you had been wounded by it? Was it merely because you had thereby brought Condemnation and Ruin upon your own Soul? Was there no Sense of its Deformity, of its Baseness, of its Malignity, as committed against the Flessed God, confidered as a Glorious, a Bountiful, and a Merciful Being? Were you never pierced by the Apprehension of its vile Ingratitude? And as for those Purpoles which have arisen in your Heart against it, let me beseech you to reslect, how they have been formed, and how they have hitherto been executed. Have they been univerfal? Have they been resolute? And jet amidit all that Relation, have they been humbled? When you declared War with Sin, was it with every Sin? And is it an irreconcileable War, which you determine, by Divine Grace, to push on till you have entirely conquered it, or die in the Attempt? And are you accordingly Active in your Endeavours to subdue and destroy it? If so, what are the Fruits worthy of Repentance which you bring forth (d) ? It does not, I hope, all flow away in Floods of Grief: Have you ceafed to do Evil? Are you learning to do well (e)? Down your Reformation shew, that you repent of your Sins; or do your renewed Relapses into Sin prove, that you repent even of what you call your Repentance? Have you an inward Abhorrence of all Sin, and an unteigned Zeal against it? And doth that produce a Care to guard against the Occasions of it, and Temptations to it? Do you watch against the Circumstances that have inspared you? And do you particularly double your Guard against that Sin which does most cashing befet you (f) ? Is that laid afide, that the Christian Race may be run; laid alide. with a firm Determination, that you will return to it

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⁽c) Prov. xxxiii. 22. (d) Lukeiii. 8. (e) Ilai. i. 16.19

Chap. 13. and into the Regard it has for Christ no more, that you will hold no more Parley with it; that you will never take another Step towards it?

6. 4. PERMIT me also farther to enquire, "What " your Views of Christ have been ? What think you of " Him, and of your Concern with Him?" Have you been fully convinced, that there must be a Correspondence fettled between him and your Soul? And do you fee and feel, that you are not only to pay Him a Kind of diltant Homage, and transient Compliment, as a very wife, benevolent, and excellent Person, whose Name and Memory you have a Reverence for; but that as He lives and reigns, as He is ever near you, and always observing you, to you must look to Him, must approach Him, must humbly transact Bufiness with Him, and that, Business of the highed Importance, on which

your Salvation depends?

6. 5. You have been brought to enquire, Wherewith for I come before the Lord, and bow myfelf before the most high GOD (g)? And once perhaps you were thinking of Sacrifices, which your own Stores might have been sufficient to furnish out. Are you now convinced, they will not fuffice; and that you must have Recourse to the Lamb which GOD bath provided? Have you had a View of Jesus, as taking away the Sin of the World (n)? as made a Sin Offering for us, tho' He knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteoufuefs of GOD in Him (i)? Have you viewed him, as perfectly Righteous in Himfeit: and despairing of being justified by any Rightenufnels of your own, have you fubmitted to the Righteo: fness of GOD (k)? Has your Heart ever been orought to a deep Conviction of this important Truth, that if ever you are laved at a l, it must be thro' Christ; that if ever God extend Mercy to you at all; it must be for his Sake; that if ever you are fixed in the Temple of GOD above, you must stand there as an everlatting trophy of that Victory which Christ has. gained over the Powers of Hell, who would otherwise have triumphed over you?

9. 6. Our Lord lays, Look unto me, and be ye faved (1): He says, If I be lifted up, I shall draw all Men

⁽g) Mic. vi. 6. (k) Rom. x. 3.

⁽h) John i. 29.

⁽i) 2 Cor. v. 21. () Mai. xlv. 287

§. 7. But if you are a Stranger to these Experiences, and to this Temper which I have now described, the

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⁽m) John xii. 32. (p) Col. i. 13.

⁽n) Matt. xi. 27: (q) Luke vii. 48.

⁽o) John vi. 53

great Work is yet undone; you are an impenitent and unbelieving Sinner, and the Wrath of GOD abideth on you (r). However you may have been kened and alarmed, whatever Refolution you may have formed for amending your Life, how right foever your Notions may be, how pure foever your Forms of Worthip, how ardent foever your Zeal, how fevere foever your Merufication, how humane foever your Temper, how inoffeasive scever your Life may be, I can speak no Comfore to you. Vain are all your religious Hopes, if there has not been a cordial Humiliacion before the Presence of God for all your Sins; if there has not been this avowed War declared against every Thing displeasing to Goo; if there has not been this S afe of your Need of Christ, and of you Ruin, without Him; if there has not been this earnes Application to Him; this Surrender of your Soul into his Hands by Faith; this Renunciation o yourfeit, that you might fix on Him the Anchor of your Hope; if there has not been this unreferred Dedication of yourfelt to be at all T mes, and in all Respects, the faithful Servant of God through Him; and if you do not with all this acknowledge that you are an unprofitable Servant, who have no other Expectations of Acceptance or of Pardon, but only thro' His Righteoniness and Blood, and thro' the Riches of Divine Grace in Him, I repeat it again that all your Hopes are vain, and you are building on the Sand (s). The House you have already raifed must be thrown down to the Ground, and the Foundation be removed and laid anew, or you, and all your Hopes, will shortly be swept away with it, and buried under it in everlasting Ruin.

The Soul submitting to Divine Examination, the Sincerity of its Repontance and Faith.

LORD GOD, Thou searchest all Hearts, and tried the Reins of the Children of Men (t).

Search me, O Lord, and know my Heart; try me,

[&]quot; and know my I boughts: and see if there be any wicked " Way in me, and lead me in the Way everlasting (v).

⁽r) lo niii. 36. (s) Matt. vii. 26. (t) Jer. xvii. 10.

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Chap. 13. and Faith to the Divine Examination.

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of its vain Ornaments! Let me know the worst of my Case, be that Knowledge ever so distressful; and if there be remaining Danger, O let my Heart be fully

" fensible while yet there is Remedy!

"If there be any secret Sin yet lurking in my Soul, which I have not sincerely renounced, discover it to me, and rend it out of my Heart, tho' it should have shot its Roots ever so deep, and should have wrapped them all around it, so that every Nerve should be pained by its Separation! Tear it away, O Lord, by a Hand graciously severe! And by Degrees, yea, Lord, by speedy Advances, go on, I beseech Thee, to perfect what is still lacking in my Faith (d)! Accomplish in me all the good Pleasure of thy Good-mess: Inrich me, O Heavenly Father, with all the Graces of Thy Spirit: Form me to the compleat Image of Thy dear Son: And then, for His Sake, come unto me, and manifest Thy gracious Presence, in my Soul (f), till it is ripened for that State of Glory, for which all these Operations are intended to prepare it! Amen."

⁽d) 1 Theff. iii. 10. (e) 2 Theff. i. 11. (f) John xiv. 21, 23.

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CHAP. XIV.

A more particular View of the feveral Branches of the CHRISTIAN TEMPER; by which the Reader may be farther affift. ed, in judging what he is, and what he should endeavour to be t.

The Importance of the Cafe engages to a more particular Survey, what Manner of Spirit we are of; \$. 1, 2. Accordingly the Christian Temper is described. (1). By fome general Views of it; as a New and Divine Temper, §. 3. As refembling that of Christ, §. 4. And as engaging us to be spiritually minded, and to walk by Faith, §. 5. A Plan of the Remainder : §. 6. In which the Christian Temper is more particularly confidered. (II). With Regard to the Bleffed GOD; as including Fear, Affection, and Obedience, 9. 7. Faith and Love to Chrift, §. 8, 9. Joy in Him, §. 10. And a proper Temper towards the Holy Spirit, partientarty as a Spirit of Adoption, and of Courage, s. 11-13. (III). With Regard to ourselves; as ineluding Preference of the Soul to the Body, Humility, Purity, §. 14. Temperance, §. 15. Contentment, -6. 16. And Patience, § 17. (IV). With Regard to our Fellow-Creatures: as including Love, §. 18. Meeknefs, \. 19. Peaceablenefs, \. 20. Mercy, \. 21. Truth

⁺ N. B. This Chapter is almost an Abridgment of that excellent Book of Dr. Lvans, intituled, The Christian Temper, to far as itre-lates to the Description of it. For particular Arguments, to inforce each Part of this Temper, I must refer the Reader to the Book itself.

Truth, §. 22. And Candour in judging, §. 23. (V). General Qualifications of each Branch; §. 24. Such as Sincerity, §. 25. Constancy, §. 26. Tenderness, §. 27. Zeal. §. 28. And Prudence, §. 29. Fr se Things should frequently be recollected, §. 30. A Review of all in a scriptural Prayer.

WHEN I consider the infinite Importance of Lternity, I find it. exceeding difficult to satisfy myself in any Thing which I can say to Men, where their Eternal Interests are concerned. I have given you a View, I hope I may truly fay, a just, as well as faithful View, of a truly Christian Temper already. Yet for your farther Affistance, I would offer it to your Confideration in various Points of Light, that you may be affilted in judging of what you are, and what you ought to be. And in this I aim, not only at your Conviction, if you are yet a Stranger to real Religion, but at your farther Edification, if by the Grace of God, you are by this Time experimentally acquainted with it. Happy you will be, happy beyond Expression, if as you go on from one Article to another, you can fay, " This is my Temper and Character." Happy in no inconfiderable Degree, if you can fay, " This is what I defire, what " I pray for, and what I purfue, in Preference to every op-" posite View, tho' it be not what I have as yet attained."

§. 2. SEARCH then, and try, what manner of Spirit you are of (a). And may He that fearcheth all Hearts direct the Enquiry, and enable you so to judge yourself, that

you may not be condemned of the Lord. (b) !

tian indeed, you have been renewed in the Spirit of your Mind (c); so renewed, as to be regenerated, and born again." It is not enough, to have assumed a new Name, to have been brought under some new Restraints, or to have made a partial Change in some Particulars of your Conduct. The Change must be great and universal. Enquire then whether you have entertained new Apprehensions of Things, have formed a practical Judgment different from what you formerly did; whether the Ends you propose, the Affections which you feel

(a) Luke ix, 55. (b) 2 Cor. xi. 31, 32. (c) Eph. 1v. 23.

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working in your Heart, and the Course of Action to which, by those Affections, you are directed, be on the whole New or Old*? Again, "If you are a Christian "indeed, you are Partaker of a Divine Lature (d); "Divine in its Original, its Tendency, and its Resemblance." Enquire therefore, whether God hath implanted a Principle in your Heart, which tends to Him, and which makes you like Him. Search your Soul attentively, to see if you have really the Image there of God's Moral Persections, of his Holiness and Righteousness, His Goodness and Fidelity, for the New Man is after GOD created in Righteousness and True Holiness (e), and is renewed in Knowledge after the Image of Him that created him (f).

6. 4. For your farther aftiffance enquire, " whether " the fame Mind be in you which was also in Christ (g); " whether you bear the Image of God's Incarnate Son, " the brighteft and faireft Resemblance of the Father, " which Earth of Heaven has ever beheld." The Bleffed Jesus designed himself to be a Model for all his Followers; and he is certainly a Model most fit for our Imitation : An Example in our cwn Nature, and in Circumflances adapted to general Use; an Example, recommended to us at once by its spotless Perfection, and by the endearing Relation in which he flands to us, as our Mafter, our triend, and our Head; as the Perion by whom our everlatting State is to be fixed, and in a Resemblance to whom our final Happineis is to confit, if ever we are happy at all. Look then into the Life and Temper of Chrift, as described and illuttrated in the Gofpels, and tearch whether you can find any Thing like it in your own Life. Have you any I hing of his Devotion, Love, and Refignation to Goo? Any Thing of His Humility, Meeknels, and Benevolence to Men? Any Thing of His Purity and Wildem, His Contempt of the World, His Patience, His Fortitude, His Zeal? And indeed all the other Branches of the Christian Temper, which do not imply previous Guilt in the Person by

⁽d) 2 Pet. i. 4. (g) Phil. ii. 5.

⁽c) Eph. iv. 24.

⁽f) Col. iii. 19.

^{*} The Reader may fee thele Thoughts illustrated at large, in the Three first of my Sermons on Regeneration:

Chap. 14. and engages to be spiritually-minded. 129

whom they are exercised, may be called in to illustrate

and affift your Enquiries under this Head.

6. 5. LET me add, " If you are a Christian, you are in the main spiritually-minded, as knowing, that is Life " and Peace, whereas to be carnally-minded is Death (h)." Tho' you live in the Flesh, you will not war after it (i); you will not take your Orders, and your Commands from it. You will indeed attend to its necessary Interefts, as Matter of Duty; but it will still be with Regard to another and a nobler Interest, that of the Rational and Immortal Spirit. Your Thoughts, your Affections, your Pursuits, your Choice, will be determined by a Regard to Things Spiritual, rather than Carnal. -In a Word, " you will walk by Faith and not by " Sight (k)." Future, Invisible, and in some Degree incomprehensible Objects, will take up your Mind. Your Faith will act on the Being of Gop, His Perfections, his Providences, His Precepts, His Threatenings, and His Promifes. It will act upon Chrift, rubom baving not feen, you will love and bonour (1). It will act on that unfers World, which it knows to be Eternal, and therefore infinitely more worthy of your affectionate Regard, than any of these Things which are seen and are Temporal (m).

§. 6. These are general Views of the Christian Temper, on which I would intreat you to examine yourself: And now I would go on to lead you into a Survey of the grand Branches of it, as relating to GOD, our Neighbour, and ourselves; and of those Qualifications, which must attend each of these Branches, such as Sincerity, Constancy, Tenderness, Zeal, and Prudence. And I begyour diligent Attention, while I lay before you a few Hints with regard to each, by which you may judge

the better, both of your State, and your Duty.

§ 7. Examine then, I intreat you, "the Temper of your Heart, with Regard to the Blessed GOD." Do you find there a reverential Fear, and a supreme Love and Veneration for his incomparable Excellencies, a Defire after Him as the Highelt Good, and a cordial Gratitude towards him as your supreme Benefactor? Can you trust his Care? Can you credit his Testimony? Do

⁽h) Rom. viii. 6. (i) 2 Cor. x. 3. (k) 2 Cor. v-79 (l) 1 Pet. i. 8. (m) 2 Cor. iv. 18.

vou desire to pay an unreserved Obedience to all that He commands, and an humble Submission to all the Disposals of His Providence? Do you design His Glory as your noblest End, and make it the great Business of your Life to approve yourself to him? Is it your governing Care to imitate him, and to serve him in Spirit and in Truth (n)?

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§. 8. FAITH in Christ I have already described at large; and therefore shall say nothing farther either of that Persuasion of His Power and Grace, which is the great Foundation of it; or of that Acceptance of Christ under all his Characters, or that Surrender of the Soul into His Hands, in which its peculiar and distinguish-

ing Nature confifts.

§. 9. If this Faith in Christ be sincere, "it will undoubtedly produce a Love to Him;" which will express itself, in affectionate Thoughts of Him; in strict Fidelity to Him; in a careful Observation of His Charge; in a Regard to His Spirit, to His Friends, and to His Interests; in a Reverence to the Memorials of His dying Love, which he has instituted; and in an ardent Desire after that Heavenly World where He dwells, and where he will at length bave all his People to dwell with him (0).

§. 10. I MAY add, agreeable to the Word of God, if that thus believing in Christ, and loving Him, you if will also rejoice in Him; in His glorious Design, and in His compleat Fitness to accomplish it, in the Promises of His Word, and in the Privileges of His People. It will be Matter of Joy to you, that such a Redeemer has appeared in this World of ours; and your Joy for yourselves will be proportionable to the Degree of Clearness, with which you discern your Inte-

reft in Him, and Relation to Him.

on "the Temper of your Heart towards the Bieffed Spi"rit." If we have not the Spirit of Christ, we are
near of His (p). If we are not led by the Spirit of GOD,
we are not the Children of GOD (q). You will then,
if you are a real Christian, define that you may be filled

⁽n) John iv. 24. (o) John xvii. 24. (p) Rom. viii. 19. (q) Rom. viii. 19.

with the Spirit (r); that you may have every Power of you Soul subject to His Authority; that his Agency on your Heart be more constant, more operative, and more delightful. And to cherish these facred Influences, you will often have Recourse to serious Consideration and Meditation: You will abstain from those Sins, which tend to grieve Him : You will improve the tender Seafons, in which he feems to breathe upon your Soul: You will strive earnestly with Gob in Prayer, that you may have Him fed on you fill more abundantly thre' Fesus Christ (s): And you will be desirous to fall in with the great End of his Mission, which was to glorify Christ (t), and to establish his Kingdom .- "You will defire his " Influences as the Spirit of Adoption," to render your Acts of Worship free and affectionate, your Obedience vigorous, your Sorrow for Sin overflowing and tender, your Refignation meek, and your Love ardent; in a Word, to carry you thro' Life and Death, with the Temper of a Child, who delights in his Father, and who longs for his more immediate Presence.

S. 12. Once more, "If you are a Christian indeed, you will be desirous to obtain the Spirit of Courage." Amidst all that Humility of Soul to which you will be formed, you will wish to commence a Hero in the Cause of Christ; opposing with a vigorous Resolution the strongest Efforts of the Powers of Darkness, the inward Corruption of your own Heart, and all the outward Dissipution of your may meet with in the Way of your Duty, while in the Cause and in the Strength of Christ

you go on conquering and to conquer.

§. 13. All these Things may be considered as Branches of Godlines; of that Godliness, which is profitable unto all Things, and hath the Promise of the Life which

now is, and of that which is to come. (u).

Stanches of the Christian Temper, "which relate more immediately to ourfelves." And here, if you are a Christian indeed, "you will undoubtedly prefer the Soul to the Body, and Things Eternal to these that are Tem-

(r) Eph. v. 18: (1) Tit. mi. 6. (1) John xvi. 14. (u) 1 Tim. iv. 8.

138 The Graces this Temper includes Chap. 14. poral." Conscious of the Dignity and Value of your Immortal Part, you will come to a firm Resolution to secure its Happiness, whatever is to be resigned, whatever is to be endured in that View --- If you are a real Christian, " you will be also cloathed with Humility (x)." You will have a deep Sense of your own Imperfections, both natural and moral; of the short Extent of your Knowledge; of the Uncertainty and Weakness of your Resolutions; and of your continual Dependence upon God, and upon almost every Thing about you. And especially, you will be deeply sensible of your Guilt: the Remembrance of which will fill you with Shame and Confusion, even when you have some Reason to hope it is forgiven. This will forbid all Haughtiness and Infolence, in your Behaviour to your Fellow-Creatures. It will teach you, under afflictive Providences, with all holy Submission to bear the Indignation of the Lord, as those that know they have finned against Him (y) .--Again, if you are a Christian indeed, "you will la-"bour after Purity of Soul," and maintain a fixed Abhorrence of all prohibited fensual Indulgence. A Recollection of palt Impurities will fill you with Shame and Grief: and you will endeavour for the future to guard your Thoughts and Defires, as well as your Words and Actions, and to abstain, not only from the Commission of Evil, but from the diffant Appearance and probable Occasions of it (z); as conscious of the perfect Holinels of that God with whom you converse, and of the purifying Nature of that Hope (a), which by his Gospel he hath taught you to entertain.

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Virtue of Temperance; which will teach you to guard against such a Use of Meats and Drinks, as indisposes the Body for the Service of the Soul; or such an Indulgence in either, as will rob you of that precious Jewel, your Time, or occasion an Expence beyond what your Circumstances will admit, and beyond what will consist with those Liberalities to the Poor, which your Relation and theirs to God and each other will require, In short, you will guard against whatever has a Tendency to in-

⁽x) 1 Pet. v. 5. (y) Micah vii. 9. (z) 1 Theff. v. 23. (a) 1 Johniii. 2.

crease a sensual Disposition; against whatever would alienate the Soul from Communion with Gon, and would diminish its Zeal and Activity in his Service.

8. 16. THE Divine Philosophy of the Blessed Jesus will also teach you " a contented Temper." It will moderate your Defires of those worldly Enjoyments, after which many feel fuch an infatiable Thirft, ever growing with Indulgence and Success. You will guard against an immoderate Care about those Things, which would lead you into a Forgetfulness of your Heavenly Inheritance. If Providence disappoint your Undertakings, you will fubmit, if others be more prosperous, you will not envy them; but rather will be thankful for what God is pleased to bestow upon them, as well as for what He gives you. No unfawful Methods will be used, to alter your present Condition; and whatever it is, you will endeavour to make the best of it; remembering, it is what infinite Wisdom and Goodness have appointed you, and that it is beyond all Comparison better than you have deserved; year that the very Deficiencies and Inconveniencies of it may conduce to the Improvement of your future and complete Happiness.

§. 17. WITH Contentment, if you are a Disciple of Christ, "you will join Patience too," and in Patience will possess your Soul (b). You cannot indeed be quite in-

sensible, either of Atslictions, or of Injuries; but your Mind will be calm and composed under them, and steady in the Prosecution of proper Duty, tho' Afslictions press, and tho' your Hopes, your dearest Hopes and Prospects be delayed: Patience will prevent hasty and rash Conclusions, and fortify you against seeking irregular Methods of Relief; disposing you in the mean Time, till God shall be pleased to appear for you, to go on steadily in the Way of your Duty; committing yourself to Him in well doing (c). You will also be careful, that Patience may bave its perfect Work (d), and prevail in Proportion to those Circumstances which demands its peculiar Exercise. For Instance, when the Successions of Evil are long and various, so that Deep calls to Deep, and all GOD's Waves and Billows seem to be going over

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The Graces of the Christian Temper. you one after another (e); when God touches you in the most tender Part; when the Reasons of His Conduct to you are quite unaccountable; when your natural Spirits are weak and decayed; when unlawful Methods of Redress seem near and easy; still your Reverence for the Will of your Heavenly Father will carry it against all, and keep you waiting quietly for Deliverance in his own Time and Way.

N. B. If this Chapter feem too long to be read at once, it may properly be divided bere.

6. 18. I HAVE thus led you into a brief Review of the Christian Temper, with respect to GOD and ourselves: Permit me now to add, " that the Gospel will teach " you another Set of very important Lesions with Re-" spect to your Fellow-Creatures." They all are fummed up in this, " Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyfelf (1); " and whatsever thou wouldst, (that is, whatsever thou " couldst in an Exchange of Circumstances fairly and " reasonably defire,) that others should do unto thee, do " thou likewise the same unto them (g)." The Religion of the Blessed Jesus, when it triumphs in your soul, will conquer the Predominancy of an irregular Self-Love, and will teach you candidly and tenderly to lock upon your Neighbour as another Self. As you are fenstble of your own Rights, you will be fensible of his; as you support your own Character, you will support his. You will defire his Welfare, and be ready to itlieve his Necessity, as you would have your own confulted by another. You will put the kindest Construction upon his dubious Words and Actions. You will take Pleasure in his Happiness, you will feel his Distress, in fome Measure as your own. And most happy will you be, when this obvious Rule is familiar to your Mind, when this golden Law is written upon your Heart; and when it is habitually and impartially consulted by you, upon every Occasion, whether great or small.

S. 19. THE Gospel will also teach you, " to fut " " Meekness (h)," not only with Respect to God, submitting CI

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⁽c) Pfal. xlii. 7. (h) Col. iii. 12.

⁽f) Rom, xiii. 9.

⁽g) Matt. vii, :fa

Chap. 14: with Regard to our Fellow Creatures. mitting to the Authority of His Word, and the Disposal of his Providence, as was urged before; but also with Regard to your Brethren of Mankind. Its gentle Infructions will form you to Calmness of Temper under Injuries and Provocations, fo that you may not be angry without, or beyond just Cause. It will engage you to guard your Words, lest you provoke and exasperate those, you should rather study by Love to gain, and by Tenderness to heal. Meekness will render you flow in using any rough and violent Methods, if they can by any Means be lawfully avoided; and ready to admit, and even to propose a Reconciliation, after they have been entered into, if there may yet be Hope of succeeding. So far as this Branch of the Christian Temper prevails in your Heart, you will take Care to avoid every Thing which might give unnecessary Offence to others; you will behave yourfelf in a modest Manner, according to your Station; and it will work both with Regard to Superiors and Inferiors; teaching you duly to honour the one, and not to overbear or oppress, to grieve or infult the other. And in Religion itself, it will restrain all immoderate Sallies and harsh Censures; and will command down that Wrath of Man, which inflead of Working, so often opposes the Righteousness of GOD (i), and shames and wounds that good Cause, in which it is boisterously and furiously engaged.

6. 20. WITH this is naturally connected " a peace-"ful Dissosition." If you are a Christian indeed, you will have such a Value and Esteem for Peace, as to endeavour to obtain, and to preserve it, as much as lieth in you (k), as much as you fairly and honourably can, This will have such an Influence upon your Conduct, as to make you not only cautious of giving Offence, and flow in taking it, but earnestly deficous to regain Peace as foon as may be, when it is in any Meafure broken; that the Wound may be healed, while it is green, and before it begins to rankle and fester, And more especially this Disposition will engage you, to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace (1), with all that in every Place call on the Name of our Lord Jesus G 6 Christ,

(i) Jam. i. 20.

(k) Rom. xii. 18,

(1) Eph, iv. 3.

All these Graces must be attended Chap. 14. Christ (m); whom if you truly love, you will also love all those, whom you have Reason to believe to be his Disciples and Samuel.

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Disciples and Servants.

§. 21. Ir you be yourselves indeed of that Number, you will also put or Bowels of Mercy (n)." The Mercies of God, and those of the blessed Redeemer, will work on your Heart, to mould it to Sentiments of Compassion and Generosity, so that you will feel the Wants and Sorrows of others; you will desire to relieve their Necessities, and, as you have an Opportunity, you will do Good, both to their Bodies and their Souls; expressing your kind Affections in suitable Actions, which may both evidence their Sincerity, and render them effectual.

§. 22. As a Christian, "you will also maintain Trush "inviolable," not only in your solemn Testimonies, when confirmed by an Oath, but likewise in common Conversation. You will remember too, that your Promises bring an Obligation upon you, which you are by no Means at Liberty to break thro. On the whole, you will be careful to keep a strict Correspondence between your Words and your Actions, in such a Manner

as becomes a Servant of the God of Truth.

§ 23. ONER more, As amidit the friceft Care to observe all the Divine Precepts, you will still find many Imperfections on Account of which you will be obliged to pray, that GOD would not enter into frict Judgment with you, as well knowing that in His Sight you cannot be justified (o); you will be careful not to judge others in such a Manner as should awaken the Severity of His Judgment against yourself (p)." You will not, therefore, judge them pragmatically, that is, when you have nothing to do with their Actions; nor rashly, without enquiring into Circumstances; nor partially, without weighing them attentively and fairly; nor uncharitably, putting the worst Construction upon Things in their own Nature dubious, deciding upon Intentions as Evil farther than they certainly appear to be lo, propouncing on the State of Men, or on the whole of their Character from any particular Action, and involving the Innocent with the Guilty. There is a Moderation contrary to all these Extremes, which the Gospel recom-

⁽m) 1 Cor. i. 2. (n) Col, iii, 12. (o) Pfal. cxliii. 2. (p) Matt. vii. 1, 2,

with other general Qualifications.

mends; and if you receive the Gospel in good Earnest into your Heart, it will lay the Ax to the Root of fuch Evils as thefe.

6. 24. HAVING thus briefly illustrated the principal Branches of the Christian Temper and Character, I shall conclude the Representation, with reminding you of " some general Qualifications, which must be mingled with all, and give a Tincture to each of them; such

" as, Sincerity, Tendernefs, Zeal, and Prudence."

6. 25. ALWAYS remember, "that Sincerity is the " very Soul of true Religion." A fingle Intention to please Gop, and to approve ourselves to Him, must animate and govern all that we do in it. Under the Influence of this Principle, you will impartially enquire into every Intimation of Duty, and apply to the Practice of it so far as it is known to you. Your Heart will be engaged in all you do. Your Conduct in private and in fecret, will be agreeable to your most public Behaviour. A Sense of the Divine Authority will teach you, to esteem all GOD's Precepts concerning all Flings to be right, and tobate every fal, e Way (q).

6. 26. Thus are you in Simplicity and godly Sincerity to have your Conversition in the World (r). And " you " are also to charge it upon your Soul, to be fledfast and immoveable, always abounding in the Work of the " Lord(s)." There must not only be forme fudden Fits and Starts of Devotion, or of so nething which looks like it, but Religion mult be an habitual and permanent Thing. There mult be a Purpose to adhere to it at all Times. It must be made the stated and ordinary Bufiness of Life. Deliberate and presumptuous Sins must be carefully avoided; a Guard must be maintained against the common Infirmities of Life; and Falls of one Kind or of another, must be Matter of propo tionable Humiliation before Gop, and mult occasion renewed Resolution for his Service. And thus you are to go on to the End of your Life, not discouraged by the Length and Difficulty of the Way, nor allured on the one Hand, or terrified on the other, by all the various Temptations which may furround and affeult you. Your Soul mut be fixed on this Basis, and you are still to behave your-

⁽q) Pfal. cxix. 128. (r) 2 Cor. i. 12. (s) 1 Cor. xv. 38.

felf as one who knows he ferves an unchangeable Gon, and who expects from him a Kingdom which cannot be

moved (t).

S. 27. AGAIN, So far as the Gospel prevails in your Heart, " your Spirit will be tender, and the Stone will be " transfermed into Flei." You will defire, that your Apprehension of Divine Things may be quick, your Affections ready to take proper Impressions, your Conscience always easily touched, and on the whole, your Resolutions pliant to the Divine Authority, and cordially willing to be, and to do, whatever God shall appoint. You will have a tender Regard to the Word of God, a tender Caution against Sin, a tender Guard against the Snares of Profperity, a tender Submission to Gon's afflicting Hand: In a Word, you will be tender, whereever the Divine Honour is concerned; and careful, neither to do any Thing yourfelf, nor to allow any Thing in another, fo far as you can influence, by which God should be offended, or Religion reproached.

§. 28. Nay more than all this, you will, so far as true Christianity governs in your Mind, "exert an boly "Zeal in the Service of your Redeemer and your Father." You will be zealously affected in every good Thing (u), in Proportion to its apprehended Goodness and Importance. You will be zealous especially, to correct what is irregular in yourselves, and to act to the utmost of your Ability for the Cause of God. Nor will you be able to look with an indifferent Eye on the Conduct of others in this View; but so far as Charity, Meekness and Prudence will admit, you will testify your Disapprobation of every Thing in it, which is dishonourable to God, and injurious to Men. And you will labour not only to reclaim Men from such Courses, but to engage them

to Religion, and to quicken them in it.

§. 29. And once more, You will defire "to use the "Prudence which God hath given you," in judging what is in present Circumstances, your Duty to God, your Neighbour, and yourself; what will be, on the whole, the most acceptable Manner of discharging it, and how far it may be the most advantageously punsued; as remembering, that He is indeed the wisest and the

Chap. 14. A Review of all in a Scriptural Prayer. 139
the happiest Man, who by constant Attention of
Thought discovers the greatest Opportunities of doing
Good, and with ardent and animated Resolution breaks
thro' every Opposition, that he may improve those Op-

portunities.

§. 30. This is fuch a View of the Christian Temper, as could conveniently be thrown within such narrow Limits! and I hope, it may assist many in the great and important Work of Sest-Examination. Let your own Conscience answer, how far you have already attained it, and how far you desire it; and let the principal Topicks here touched upon be fixed in your Memory and in your Heart, that you may be mentioning them before God in your daily Addresses to the Throne of Grace, in order to receive from him all necessary Assistances for bringing them into Practice.

APRAYER, chiefly in Scripture Language, in which the feweral Branches of the Christian Temper are more briefly enumerated in the Order laid down above.

BLESSED God, I humbly adore Thee, as "the great Father of Lights, and the Giver of every good and every perfect Gift (x). From Thee therefore I feek every Blessing, and especially those, which lead me to Thyself, and prepare me for the Eternal Enjoyment of Thee. I adore Thee, as the GOD, who fearches the Hearts, and tries the Reins of the Children of Men (y). Search me, O God, and know my Heart; try me and know my Thoughts: See if there be any wicked Way in me, and lead me in the Way everlasting (z). May I know what Manner of Spirit I am of (a), and be preserved from mistaking, where the Error might be infinitely fatal!

" May I, O. Lord, be renewed in the Spirit of my

" Mind (b)! A new Heart do Thou give me, and a " new Spirit do Thou put within me (c)! Make me

" Partaker of a Divine Nature (d); and as He who bath called me is Holy, may I be Holy in all Manner

⁽x) Jam. i. 17. (y) Jer. xvii. 10. (z) Pfal. ex xxix. 23, 24. (a) Luke ix. 55. (b) Fph. iv. 23. (c) Ezek, xxxiv. 26. (d) 4 Pet. i. 4.

A Prayer in Scripture Language, Chap. 14. " of Conversation (e). May the same Mind be in me, " which was also in Christ Jesus (f); may I so walk " even as be walked (g)! Deliver me from being car. " nally minded, which is Death; and make me Spiritu-" ally minded, fince that is Life and Peace (h)! And " may I, while I pass through this World of Sense, " walk by Faith, and not by Sight (i); and be frong in " Faith, giving Glory to GOD (k). " May Thy Grace, O Lord, which hath oppeared " unto all Men, and appeared to me, with fuch glori-" ous Evidence and Lustre, effectually teach me to deny " Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberiy " righteoufly and godly (1)! Work in my Heart that " Godliness, which is profitable unto all Things (m); and " teach me by the Influence of thy Bleffed Spirit, to " love Thee the Lord my GOD, with all my Heart, " and with all my Soul, and with all my Mind, and " with all my Strength (n)! May I yield myfelf unto " Thee, as alive from the Dead (0); and present my Body " a living Sacrifice, boly, and acceptable in Thy Sight, " which is my most reasonable Service (p)! May I en-" tertain the most faithful and affectionate Regards to the Blessed Jejus, Thine incarnate Son, the Bright-" ness of thy Glory, and the express Image of thy Per-" fon (q) ! Tho' I have not feen Him, may I love Him; " and in Him, the' now I fee Him not, yet believing, may I rejoice with Joy unspeakable and full of Glo-" ry (r): And may the Life which I live in the Flesh, " be daily by the Faith of the Son of GOD (s) ! May I " be filled with the Spirit (t); and may I be led by it (u); " and so may it be evident to others, and especially to " my own Soul, that I am a Child of God, and an " Heir of Glory ! May I not receive the Spirit of Bond-" age unto Fear, but the Spirit of Adoption, whereby I " may be enabled to cry, Abba, Father, (x) / May He " work in me, as the Spirit of Love, and of Power, es and

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() 1 Pet. i. 15!	(f) Phil. ii. 5.	(g) 1 John ii. 6.
(1., Rom. viii. 6.	(i) 2 Cor. v. 7.	(k) Rom. iv. 20.
(') 1st. 11, 12.	(m) . Tim. iv. 8.	(n) Mark xii. 30.
(o) Rom. vi. 13.	(p) Rom. xii. t.	(q) Heb 31
(1) 1 Pet. i. 8.	() Gal. ii. 20.	() Eph. v. 18.

(1) Rom, viii. 14. (x) Rom. viii. 154

and of a found Mad (y); that fo I may add to my " Faith. Virtue. (2) ! May I be Arong, and very courase geous (a), and quit myfelf like a Man (b), and like a " Christian, in the Work to which I am called, and in " that Warfare which I had in View, when I listed " under the Banner of the great Captain of my Sal-

" vation!

" Teach me, O Lord, seriously to consider the Na-" ture of my own Soul, and to fet a fuitable Value upon " it! May I labour, not only, or chiefly, for the Meat " that perisheth but for that which endweth to Eternal " Life (c)! May I humble my elf under thy Mighty " Hand, and be clothed weth Hemility (1); decked with " the Ornament of a meck and quiet Sirit. which in the " Sight of GOD is of great Price (e)! May I be pure " in Heart, that I may fee GOD (1); mortifying my " Mimbers which are on the Earth (g), fo that if a " Right Eye offend me, I may pluck it out, and if a Right " Hand offend me, I may cut it off (n)! May I be " temperate in all Things (i), content with fuch Things " as I have (k), and instructed to be to, it what sever " State I am (1)! May Patience also bave its perfect " Work in me, that I may be in that Respect compleat and " wanting nothing (m)!

" Form me, O Lord, I befeech Thee, to a preper " Temper towards my Fellow Creatures! May I love my " Neighbour as myself (n); and what soever I would that others should do unto me, may I also do the same unto " them (o) ! May I put on Meekness (p) under the greatest " Injuries and Provocations; and if it be possible, as " much as lieth in me, may I live peaceably with all " Men (q)! May I be merciful, as my Father in Hea-" wen is merciful (r)! May I speak the Truth from my

" Heart (s); and may I Speak it in Love (t); guarding against

(y) 2 Tim. i. 17. (b) 1 Cor. xvi. 13. (c) 1 Pet. iii. 4. (h) Matt. v. 29, 30.

(1-Phil. iv. 11. (º) Matt. vii. 13.

(1) Luke vi. 36.

(z) 2 Pet. i. 5. (t) John vi. 27.

(f) Matt. v. 8. (i) 1 Cor. ix. 25.

(m) Jam. i. 4. (p) Col. iii. 12. (s) Pfal. xv. 2.

(a) Josh. i. 7. (d) 1 Pet. v. 5, 6.

(g) Col. iu. 5. (k) Heb. xiii. 5

(n) Gal. v. 14. (q) Rom. xii. 18.

(1) Eph. iv. 15.

" against every Instance of a censorious and malignant Disposition; and taking Care not to judge severely, as

" I would not be judged (u) with a Severity, which Thou

" Lord, knowest, and which mine own Conscience

" knows, I should not be able to support!

"I intreat Thee, O Lord, to work in me all those Qualifications of the Christian Temper, which may ren-

" der it peculiarly acceptable to Thee, and may prove ornamental to my Profession in the World. Renew, I

beseech Thee, a right Spirit within me (x); make me

an Israelite indeed in aubom there is no allowed Guile

" (y)! And while I feast on Christ, as my Passover facrificed for me, may I keep the Feast with the un.

" leavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth (z)! Make me,

" I befeech Thee, O Thou Almighty and unchange-

" able God, Redfast and immoveable, always abounding

in thy Work, as knowing that my labour in the Lord fall not be finally in vain (a)! May my Heart be ten-

der (b), easily impressed with I hy Word and Provi-

dence, touched with an affectionate Concern for thy

Glory, and fenfible of every Impulse of thy Spirit!

" May I be zealous for my GOD (c), with a Zeal ac-

cording to Knowledge (a, and Charity (e); and teach

me in thy Service to join the Wisacm of the Serpent

(t), with the Boldness of the Lion, and the Innocence of the Dove! Thus render me, by thy Grace, a thining

" Image of my dear Redeemer, and at length bring me

to wear the bright Refemblance of His Holinets and

* His Glory, in that World where he dwells; that I

" may afcribe everlasting Honours to Him, and to The,

O Thou Father of Mercies, whose invaluable Gift He

" is, and to Thine Holy Spirit, thro' whose gracious In-

" fluences I would humbly hope, I may call Thee my

Father, and Jesus my Saviour! Amen,"

(u) Matt. vii. 1. (x) Pfal. li. 10. (y) John i 47. (z) 1 Cor. v. v. 8. (a) 1 Cor. xv. 58. (b) 2 Kings xvii. 19.

(c) Numb. xxv. 13. (d) Rom. x. 2. (e) 1 Cor. xvi. 14.

(f) Matt. x. 16.

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CHAP. XV.

The Reader reminded how much he needs the Affistance of the Spirit of GOD, to form him to the Temper described above, and what Encouragement he has to expect it.

Forward Resolutions may prove ineffectual: §. 1. Yes Religion is not to be given up in Despair, but Diving Grace fought, §. 2. A general View of its Reality and Necessity, from Reason, § 3. And Scripture, §. 4. The Spirit to be sought as the Spirit of Christ, §. 5. And in that View, the great Strength of the Soul, 5. 6. The Encouragement there is to hope for the Communication of it, §. 7. A concluding Exhortation to pray for it: §. 8. And an humble Address to GOD, pursuant to that Exhortation.

6. 1. THAVE now laid before you a Plan of that Temper and Character, which the Gospel requires, and which, if you are a true Christian, you will defire and pursue. Surely there is in the very Description of it fomething which must powerfully firike every Mind, which has any taste for what is truly beautiful and excellent. And I question not, but you my dear Reader, will feel some Impression of it upon your Heart. You will immediately form some lively Purpose of endeavouring after it; and perhaps you may imagine, you shall certainly and quickly attain to it. You see how reasonable it is, and what desireable Consequences necesfarily

§. 2. WHAT then is to be done? Is the convinced Sinner to lie down in Despair? to say, "I am an help"less Captive, and by exerting myself with Violence may break my Limbs sooner than my Bonds, and "increase the Evil I would remove." GOD forbid!

(1) Hof. vi. 4:

(b) Josh. xxiv. 19.

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You cannot, I am persuaded, be so little acquainted with Christianity, as not to know, "that the Doctrine of "Divine Assistances bears a very considerable Part in it." You have often, I doubt not, read of the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, as making us free from the Law of Sin and Death (c); and have been told, that thro' the Spirit, we mortisty the Deeds of the Body (d): You have read of doing all Things thro' Christ who strengtheneth us (e); whose Grace is sufficient for us, and whose Strength is made perfect in Weakness (f): Permit me, therefore, now to call down your Attention to this, as a Truth of the clearest Evidence, and the utmost Importance.

§ 3. REASON indeed, as well as the whole Tenor of Scripture, agrees with this*. The whole created World has a necessary Dependence on Gon: from Him even the Knowledge of Natural Things is derived (g), and Skill in them is to be ascribed to Him (h). Much more loudly does fo great and excellent a Work, as the newforming the Human Mind, bespeak its Divine Author. When you consider how various the Branches of the Christian Temper are, and how contrary many of them also a e to that Temper, which hath prevailed in your Heart, and governed your Life in lime past; you must really fee Divine Influences as necessary to produce and nourish them, as the Influences of the Sun and Rain are to call up the Variety of Plants and Flowers, and Grain and Fruits, by which the Earth is adorned, and our Life supported. You will yet be more sensible of this, if you reflect on the violent Opposition which this happy Work must expect to meet with, of which I shall prefently warn you more largely, and which if you have not already experienced, it must be because you have but very lately begun to think of Religion.

5. 4. ACCORDINGIY, if you give yourself Leave to consult Scripture on this Head, (and if you would live like a Christian, you must be consulting it every Day, and forming your Notions and Actions by it;) you will

⁽c) Rom. viii. 2. (d) Rom. viii. 13. (c) Phil. iv. 13. (f) 2 Cor. xii 9. (g) Pfal. xciv 10. (h) Exod. xxxi. 3,—6.

[&]quot;See many of these I houghts much more largely illustrated in my VIIIth Sermon on Regeneration.

146 The Spirit must be sought for by the Soul. Chap. 15. see, that the whole Tenor of it teaches that Dependence upon God, which I am now recommending. You will particularly see, that the Production of Religion in the Soul is Matter of Divine Promise; that when it has been effected, Scripture ascribes it to a Divine Agency; and that the Increase of Grace and Piety in the Heart of those who are truly regenerate, is also spoken of at the Work of God, who begins and carries it on until the Day

of Jefus Chrift (i).

4. 5. In Consequence of all these Views, lay it down to yourfelf as a most certain Principle, " that no At-" tem; tin Religion is to be made in your own Strength." If you forget this, and God purposes finally to save you, he will humble you by repeated Disappointments, till he teach you better. You will be ashamed of one Scheme and Effort, and of another, till you fettle upon the true Basis. He will also probably shew you, not only in the general, that your Strength is to be derived from Heaven; but particularly, that it is the Office of the Bleffed Spirit, to purify the Heart, and to invigorate holy Refolutions; and also, that in all these Operations he is to be confidered as the Spirit of Christ, working under his Direction, and as a vital Communication from Him under the Character of the great Head of the Church, the grand Treasurer and Dispenser of these holy and beneficial Influences. On which account it is called the Supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ (k), who is exalted at the Right Hand of the Father, to give Repentance and Remission of Sins (1); in whose Grace alone we can be strong (m), and of whose Fulness we receive, even Grace for Grace (n).

§. 6. RESOLVE- therefore strenuously for the Service of God, and for the Care of your Soul; but " resolve modestly and humbly." Even the Youths shall faint and be weary, and the Young Men utterly fall; but they who wait on the Lord, are the Persons who renew their Strength (0). When a Soul is almost asraid to declare in the Presence of the Lord, that it will not do this, or that, which has formerly offended him; when it is asraid absolutely to promise, that it will perform this, or that

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⁽i) Phil. i. 6. (m) 3. Tim. ii. 1.

⁽k) Phil i. 19. (1) Acts v. 31 (n) John i. 16. (o) Ifa. xl. 30, 31.

Chap. 15. The Encouragement there is to expect it. 147 Duty, with Vigour and Constancy; but only expresses its humble earnest Desire, that it may by Grace be enabled, to avoid the one; or pursue the other; then so far as my Observation and Experience have reached, it is in the best Way to learn the happy Art of conquering.

Temptation, and of discharging Duty.

§. 7. On the other Hand, let not your Dependence upon this Spirit, and your Sense of your own Weakness and Insufficiency for any Thing spiritually Good without his continual Aid, discourage you from devoting yourfelf to God, and engaging in a religious Life, confidering " what abundant Realon you have to hope, that " thefe gracious Influences will be communicated to " you"-The Light of Nature, at the same Time that it teaches the Need we have of Help from God in a vir. tuous Courfe, may lead us to conclude, that fo benevolent a Being, who beltows on the most unworthy and careless Part of Mankind so many Bessings, will take a peculiar Pleasure in communicating to such as humbly alk them, those gracious Assistances, which may form their deathless Souls isto his own Resemblance, and fit them for that Happiness to which their Rational Nature is futted, and for which it was in its first Constitution intended, - The Word of GOD will much more abundantly confirm such an Hope. You there hear Divine Wisdom crying even to those who had long trifled with her Instructions, Turn ye at my Reproof, and I will four out my Spirit upon you (p). You hear the Apofile faying, Let us come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to Help in every Time of Need (q). Yea, you there hear our Lord himself arguing in this sweet and convincing Manner; If ye being evil, know bow to give good Gifts unto your Children, bow much more shall your Heavenly Father give bis Holy Spirit unto them that afk Him (r)? This Gift and Promise of the Spirit was given unto Christ, when he ascended up on High, in Truft for all his true Disciples. God hath shed it abroad abundantly upon us in Him (s). And I may add. that the very Defire you feel after the farther Communication of the Spirit, is the Result of the First-fruits

⁽p) Prov. i. 23.

of it already given: So that you may with peculiar Propriety is terpret it as a special Call, to open your Mouth wide, that he may fill it (t). You thirst, and therefore you may chearfully plead, that Jesus hath invited you to come into Him and drink; with a Promise, not only that you shall drink if you come unto Him, but also that out of your Belly shall slow, as it were, Rivers of Living Water, tor the Edit cation and Refreshment of others (u).

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§. 4. Go forth therefore, with humble Chearfulness, to the Prosecution of all the Duties of the Christian Life. Go, and prosper, in the Strength of the Lord, making mention of His Rightconsness, and of His only (x). And as a Token of farther Communications, may your Heart be quickened to the most earnest Desire, after the Blessings I have now been recommending to your Pursuit! May you be stirred up to pour out your Soul before God, in such holy Breathings as these! and may they be your daily Language in His gracious Presence!

An Humble Supplication for the Influences of Divine Grace, to form and firengthen Religion in the Soul.

BLESSED God! I sincerely acknowledge before Thee, mine own Weakness and Insus-

ficiency for any Thing that is spiritually Good. I have experienced it a Thousand Times; and yet my

" foolish Heart would again trust itself (y), and form

Resolutions in its own Strength. But let this be the

First-fruits of thy gracious Influence upon it, to bring it to an humble Distrust of itself, and to a Repose

" on Thee!

"Abundantly do I rejoice, O Lord, in the kind

Affurances which Thou givest me, of thy Readiness to bestow liberally and richly so great a Benest. I

" do therefore, according to Thy condescending Invi-

tation, come with boldness to the Ibrone of Grace, that

" I may find Grace to help in every Time of Need (2). 1

mean not, O Lord God, to turn Thy Grace into Wan-

tonness or Perverseness (a), or to make my Weaku ness an Excuse for Negligence and Sloth. I confess

(t) Pfal. Ixxxi. 10. (u) John vii. 27, 38. (x) Pfal. 1xxi. 16: (y) Prov. xxviii. 26. (z) Heb. iv. 16. (a) Jude, ver. 4:

"Thou hast already given me more Strength than I " have used; and I charge it apon myself, and not on "Thee, that I have not long fince received still more " abundant Supplies. I defire for the future to be found. diligent in the Use of all appointed Means; in the " Neglect of which, I well know, that Petitions like " these would be a profane Mockery, and might much " more probably provoke Thee to take away what I have, than prevail upon Thee to impart more. But " firmly resolving to exert myself to the urmost, I earnelly intreat the Communications of Thy Grace,

" that I may be enabled to fulfil that Resolution.

" Be Surety, O Lord, unto thy Servant for Good (b) "Be pleased to shed abroad Thy Sanctifying Influences on my Soul, to form me for every Duty Thou requi-" rest! Implant, I beseech Thee, every Grace and Vir-" tue deep in mine Heart; and maintain the happy Tem-" per in the midst of those Assaults, from within and " from without, to which I am continually liable, while " I am still in this World, and carry about with me fo " many Infirmities! Fill my Breaft, I beseech Thee, " with good Affections, towards Thee, my Gon, and " towards my Fellow-Creatures! Remind me always " of Thy Presence; and may I remember, that every " fecret Sentiment of my Soul is open to Thee! May I " therefore guard against the first Risings of Sin, and " the first Approaches to it! And that Satan may not " find Room for his Evil Suggestions, I earnestly beg, "Thou, Lord, wouldst fill my Heart by Thine Holy " Spirit, and take up thy Residence there! Dwell in. " me, and walk with me (c); and let my Body be the " Temple of the Holy Gboft (d)!

" May I be so joined to Christ Jesus my Lord, as to be one Spirit with Him (e), and feel his invigorating " Influences continually bearing me on, superior to " every Temptation, and to every Corruption! That " while the Youths shall faint and be aveary, and the " young Men utterly fall, I may to wait upon the Lord, " as to renew my Strength (t); and may go on from one

[&]quot; Degree (b) Pfal. cxix. 122. (c) 2 Cor. vi. 16. (d) 1 Cor. vi. 19. (c) 1 Cor. vi. 17. (i) Mai, xl. 30, 31.

A Supplication for Divine Grace. Chap. 15.

Degree of Faith, and Love, and Zeal, and Holiness,

to another, till I appear perfect before Thee in Zion (g).

to drink in immortal Vigour and Joy, from Thee,

as the everlasting Fountain of both, thro' Jesus Christ

my Lord, in whom I have Righteousness and Strength

(h), and to whom I desire ever to ascribe the Praise

of all mine Improvements in both! Amen."

(g) Pfal. lx x xiv. 7. (h) Ifai. xlv. 24.

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Chap. 16.

CHAP. XVI.

The Christian Convert warned of, and animated against, those Discouragements which he must expect to meet with, when entering on a Religious Course.

Christ has instructed his Disciples to expect Opposition and Dissipilities in the Way to Heaven, §. 1, Therefore, [I.] A more particular View of them is taken, as arising, (1.) From the Remainders of indwelling Sin, §. 2. (2.) From the World, and especially from sormer sinful Companions, §. 3. From the Temptations and Suggestions of Satan, §. 4. [II.] The Christian is animated and encouraged by various Considerations to oppose them; particularly, by——the Presence of GOD,——the Aids of Christ,——the Example of others, who the seedle have conquered,——and the Grown of Glory to be expected, §. 5, 6. Therefore, the Apostacy would be infinitely satal, the Christian may press on chearfully, §. 7. Accordingly the Soul alarmed by these Views, is represented as committing itself to GOD, in the Prayer which concludes the Chapter.

Master required us, to firive to enter in at the strait Gate (a); thereby (as it seems) intimating, not only that the passage is narrow, but that it is beset with Enemies; beset on the Right Hand, and on the Lest, with Enemies cunning and formidable. And be H 2

assured, O Reader, that whatever your Circumstances in Life are, you must meet and encounter them. It will therefore be your Prudence, to survey them attentively in your own Reslections, that you may see what you are to expect; and may consider in what Armour it is necessary you shall be clothed, and with what Weapons you must be furnished to manage the Combat. You have often heard them marshalled, as it were, under Three great Leaders, the Flesh, the World, and the Devil; and according to this Distribution, I would call you to consider the Forces of each, as setting themselves in Artay against you. Oh that you may be excited to take to yourself the whole Armour of GOD (b), and to acquit

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(d) Gal. v. 19

your felf like a Man (c), and a Christian!

f. 2. Ler your Conscience answer, whether you do not carry about with you a corrupt, and degenerate Nature? You will, I doubt not, feels its Effects. You will feel in the Language of the Apofile, (who speaks of it as the Case of Christians themselves,) the Flesh lusting against the Spirit, so that you will not be able, in all Instances, to do the Things that you would (d). You brought irregular Propenficies into the World along with you; and you have so often indulged those sinful Inclinations, that you have greatly increased their Strength; and you will find in Confequence of it, that thefe Habits cannot be broke thro' without great difficulty. You will, no doubt, often recollect the strong Figures, in which the Prophet describes a Case like yours; and you will own, that it is juftly represented by that of an Ethiopian changing his Skin, and the Leopard his Spois (e) Itis indeed possible, that you may find such an Edge and Eagerness upon your Spirits, as may lead you to imagine that all Opposition will immediately fall before you. But alas, I fear, that in a little Time these Enemies, which feemed to be flain at your Feet, will revive, and recover their Weapons, and renew the Affault in one Form or another. And perhaps your most painful Combats may be with such as you had thought most easy to be vanquished and your greatest Danger may arise from some of those Enemies from whom you apprehend the least; particularly

⁽e) Jer.xii.23.

⁽c) 1 Cor. xvi. 13.

cularly from Pride, and from Indolence of Spirit; from a fecret Alienation of Heart from God, and from an Indifposition for conversing with Him, thro' an immoderate Attachment to Things feen and Temporal, which may be oftentimes exceeding dangerous to your Salvation, tho' perhaps they be not absolutely and universally prohibited. In a Thousand of these Instances, you must learn to deny yourself, or you cannot be Christ's Disciple (f).

6. 3. You must also lay your Account, to find great Difficulties from the World; from its Manners, Customs, and Examples. The Things of the World will hinder you one Way, and the Men of the World another. Perhaps you may meet with much less Assistance in Religion, than you are now ready to expect from Good Men. The present Generation of them is generally so cautious to avoid every Thing that looks like Oftentation, and there feems fomething fo insupportably dreadful in the Charge of Enthusiasm, that you will find most of your Christian Brethren studying to conceal their Virtue and their Piery, much more than others study to conceal their Vice and their Profanenels. But while, unless your Situation be fingularly happy, you meet with very little Aid one Way, you will, no doubt, find great Opposition another. The Enemies of Religion will be bold and active in their Affaults, while many of its Friends feem unconcerned: And one Sinner will probably exert himfelf more to corrupt you, than Ten Christians to secure and fave you. They who have been once your Companions in Sin, will try a Thousand artful Methods to allure you back again to their forfaken society: Some of them perhaps, with an Appearance of tender Fondness; and many more by the almost irresistible Art of Banter and Ridicule: That boatted Test of Right and Wrong, as it has been wantonly called, will be tried upon you, perhaps without any Regard to Decency, or even to common Humanity. You will be derided and infulted by those, whose Etteem and Affection you naturally defire; and may find much more Propriety than you imagine, in that Expression of the Apostle, the Trial of cruel Mockings (g), which some fear more than either Sword or Flames. This Persecution of the Tongue you must expect to go thro', H 3

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and perhaps may be branded as a Lunatick, for no other Cause, than that you now begin to Exercise your Reason to Purpose, and will not join with those that are destroying their own Souls, in the wild Career of Folly and Madness.

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§. 4. And it is not at all improbable, that in the mean Time Satan may be doing his utmost to discourage and distress you. He will, no doubt, raise in your Imagination the most tempting Idea of the Gratifications, the Indulgences, and the Companions, you are obliged to forfake; and give you the most discouraging and terrify. ing View of the Difficulties, Severities, and Dangers, which are (as he will perfuade you) inseperable from Religion. He will not fail to represent GOD Himfelf, the Foun ain of Goodness and Happiness, as an bard Master, what it is impossible to please. He will perhaps fill you with the most distressful Fears, and with cruel and insolent Malice glory over you as his Slave, when he knows you are the Lord's Freeman. At one Time he will fludy by his vile fuggestions to interrupt you in your Duties, as if they gave him an additional Power over you. At another Time he will endeavour to weary you of your Devotion, by influencing you to prolong it to an immoderate and tedious Length, lest his Power should be exerted upon you when it ceases. In short, this practifed Deceiver has Artifices, which it would require whole Volumes to display, with particular Cautions against each. And he will follow you with malicious Arts and Pursuits to the very End of your Pilgrimage; and will leave no Method unattempted, which may be likely to weaken your Hands, and to fadden your Heart, that if thro' the gracious Interpolition of God, he cannot prevent your final Happiness, he may at least impair your Peace and your Usefulness, as you are passing to it..

what you will feel in some Degree or other, if you have your Lot and your Portion among them. But after all be not discouraged: Christ is the Captain of your Salvation (h). It is delightful to consider him, under this View. When we take a Survey of these Hosts of Enemies, we may lift up our Head smidst them all, and say, More and greater, is He that is with us, than

Chap. 16. Yet has be fill enough to encourage bim. 155 all those that are against us (i) . Irust in the Lord, and you will be like Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever (k). When your Enemies press upon you, remember you are to fight in the Presence of GOD (1) Endeavour therefore to act a gallant and a resolute Part; endeavour to refist them stedfast in the Faith (m). Remember, He can give Power to the Faint, and increase Strength to them that have no Might (n). He hath done it in Ten Thousand Instances already; and He will do it in Ten Thousand more. How many Striplings have conquered their gigantick Foes in all their most formidable Armour, when they have gone forth against them, tho' but as it were with a Staff and a Sling in the Name of the Lord GOD of Ifrael. (0)! How many Women and Children have trodden down the Force of the Enemy, and out of Weakness bave been made strong (p)!

§. 6. Am DST all the Opposition of Earth and Hell, look upward, and look forward, and you will feel your Heart animated by the View Your General is near: He is near to aid you: He is near to reward you. When you feel the Tempration press the hardest, think of H m who endured even the Cross itself for your Rescue. View the Fortisude of your Divine Leader, and endeayour to march on in his Steps. Hearken to His Voice, for He proclaims it aloud, Behold, I come quickly, and my Reward is with me q): Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give Thee a Crown of Life (r). And Oh how bright will it shine! and how long will its Lustre latt! When the Gems that adorn the Crowns of Monarchs, and pass (instructive Thought!) from one Royal Head to another thro' succeeding Centuries, are melted down in the last Flame, it is a Crown of Glory which

fadeth not away s).

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§. 7. It is indeed true, that such as turn aside to crooked Path, will be led forth with the Workers of Iniquity (1) to that terrible Execution, which the Divine Justice

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(i) Kings vi. 16, (m) 1 Pet v. 9. (p) Heb. xi. 34. (s) 1 Pet, v. 4.

⁽k) Pfal. exxv. x. (!) Zech. x 5. (n) Ifai. xl, 29 (o) 1 Sam. x ii. 40, -4. (q) Rev. xxii. 12. (r) Rev. ii. 10.

⁽¹⁾ Pfal. CXXV. 5.

is preparing for them; and it would have been better for them, not to have known the Way of Righteoufness, than after having known it, to turn afide from the Holy Commandment (u). But I would, by Divine Grace, hope better Things of you (x). And I make it my hearty Prayer for you, my Reader, that you may be kept by the mighty Power of GOD, kept as in a Garrison, on all Sides fortified, in the securest Manner, theo' Faith unto Salvation (y).

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(b) 2 Cor. xil. 9

(t) Prov. i. 10

The Soul alarmed by a Sense of these Difficulties, committing itself to Divine Protection.

BLESSED God, it is to Thine Almighty "Power that I flee. Behold me furrounded s, with Difficulties and Dangers, and firetch out Thine " Omnipotent Arm to fave me; Ob then that favest by " The Right Hand them that put their Trust in Thee, from " those that rise up against them (z). This Day de I folemnly put myfelf under Thy Protection : Exert " Thy Power in my Favour, and permit me to make the " Shadow of thy Wings my Refuge (a)! Let Thy Grace se be sufficient for me, and thy Strength be made perfect " in my Weakness (b). I dare not say, I will never " forfake thee; I will never deny thee (c): But I hope, "I can truly fay, O Lord, I would not do it; and " that according to my present Apprehension and Purpole, Death would appear to me much less terrible, than in any wilful and deliberate Instance to offend "Thee. Oh root out those Corruptions from my Heart, which in an Hour of preffing Temptation might incline me to view Things in a different Light, and fo " might betray me into the Hands of the Enemy! "Strengthen my Faith, O Lord, and encourage my " Hope! Inspire me with an heroick Resolution in op-"poling every Thing that lies in my Way to Heaven; " and let me fet my Face like a Flint (d), against all the " Assaults of Earth and Hell! If Sinuers entice me, let " me not confent (e); if they infult me, let me not reer gard (x) Heb. vi 9. · (y) 1 Pet. 11.5. (n) 2 Pet. ii. 21.

() Pfal. lvii. 1.

(d) Ifai. 1.7.

(z) Pfal. xvii. 7.

(c) Mark xiv. 31.

gard it; if they threaten me, let me not fear! Rather may a holy and ardent, yet prudent and well-go-werned Zeal, take Occasion from that Malignity of Heart which they discover, to attempt their Conwiction and Reformation! At least, let me never be ashamed to plead Thy Cause against the most profane Deriders of Religion! Make me to hear foy and Gladness in my Soul; and I will endeavour to teach unto thee (f)! Yea, Lord, while my Fears consumed unto thee (f)! Yea, Lord, while my Fears continue, tho' I should apprehend myself condemned, I am condemned to righteously for my own Folly, that I would be Thine advocate, tho' against myself.

"Keep me, O Lord, now, and at all Times! Never let me think, whatever Age or Station I attain, that I am strong enough to maintain the Combat without Thee! Nor let me imagine myself, even in this Intancy of Religion in my Soul, so weak, that Thou canst not support me! Wherever Thou leadest me, there let me follow; and whatever Station thou appointest me, there let me labour; there let me maintain the Holy War against all the Enemies of my Salvation, and rather fall in it than basely abandon it!

"And Thou, O glorious Redeemer, the Captain of my Salvation, the great Author and Finisher of my Faith (g), when I am in danger of denying Thee, as Peter did, look upon me with that Maxure of Majesty and Tenderness (h), which may either secure me from falling, or may speedily recover me to God and my Duty again! And teach me to take Occasion, even from my Miscarriages, to humble myself more deeply for all that has been amiss, and to redouble my future Diligence and Caution! Amen."

(f) Pfal. li. 8, 13. (g) Heb. xii. 2. (h) Luke xxii. 61.

CHAP. XVII.

The CHRISTIAN urged to, and affisted in, an express Act of Self-Dedication to the Service of GOD.

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The Advantages of fuch a Surrender are briefly suggested, §. 1. Advice for the Manner of doing it; that it be deliberate, chearful, entire, perpetual; §. 2, 3, 4. And that it be expressed with some affecting Solemnity, §. 5. A written Instrument to be signed and declared before GOD at some Season of extraordinary Devotion, proposed, §. 6, 7. The Chapter concludes with a Specimen of such an Instrument, together with an Abstract of it, to be used with proper and requisite Alterations.

S I would hope, that notwithstanding all the Views of Opposition which do or may arise, yet in Confideration of those noble Suports and Motives which have been mentioned in the Two preceding Chapters, you are heartily determined for the Service of God, I would now urge you to make a Solemn Surrender of jourself unto it. Do not only form such a Purpose in your Heart, but expressly declare it in the Divine Pre-Such Solemnity in the Manner of doing it, is certainly very reasonable in the Nature of Things; and fure it is highly expedient, for binding to the Lord fuch a treacherous Heart, as we know our own to be. It will be pleasant to reflect upon it, as done at such and such a Time, with such and such Circumstances of Place and Method, which may serve to strike the Memory and the Conscience. The Sense of the Vows of GOD which are upon you, will ftrengthen you in an Hour of Temptation;

Chap. 17. by an express Ast to the Service of GOD. 159 tation; and the Recollection may also encourage your humble Boldness and Freedom in applying to Him, under the Character and Relation of your Covenant GOD

and Father, as future Exigencies may require.

§ 2. Do it therefore, but do it deliberately. der, what it is, that you are to do: And confider how reasonable it is, that it should be done, and done cordially and chearfully; not by Constraint, but willingly (a): For in this Sense, and in every other, God loves a chearful Giver (b). Now fure, y there is nothing we should do with greater Chearfulness or more cordial Confent, than making fuch a Surrender of ourselves to the Lord; to the God, who created us, who brought us into this pleafant and well furnished World, who supported us in our tender Infancy, who guarded us in the thoughtless Days of Childhood and Youth, who has hitherto continually helped, fullained, and preserved us. Nothing can be more reasonable than that we should acknowledge Him, as our rightful Owner and our Sovereign Ruler; than that we should devote ourselves to Him, as our most gracious Benefactor, and seek Him as our supreme Felicity. Nothing can be more apparently equitable, than that we, the Product of His Power, and the Price of His Son's Blood, should be His, and His for ever. If you see the Matter in its just View, it will be the Grief of your Soul, that you have ever alienated yourfelf from the Bleffed God and His Service; fo far will you be from wishing to continue in that Estate of Alienation another Year or another Day, you will rejoice to bring back to Him His revolved Creature; and as you have in Times past yielded your Members as Instruments of Unrighteousness unto Sin, you will delight to yield yourselves unto GOD, as alive from the Dead, and to employ your Members as Instruments of Righteousness unto GOD (c).

§ 3. The Surrender will also be as entire, as it is chearful and immediate. All you are, and all you have and all you can do, your Time, your Possessions, your Influence over others, will be devoted to Him, that for the future it may be employed entirely for Him, and to His Glory. You will desire to keep back nothing from Him; but will seriously judge, that you are then in the

(a) 1 Pet. v. 2. (b) 2 Cor. ix. 7. (c) Rom. vi. 13

truest and noblest Sense your own, when you are most entirely His. You are also on this great Occasion, to resign all that you have to the Disposal of His wise and gracious Providence; not only owning His Power, but confenting to his undoubted Right, to do what he pleases with you, and all that he has given you; and declaring a hearty Approbation of all that he has done, and of all that he may farther do.

§. 4. ONCE more, Let me remind you, that this Surrender must be perfetual. You must give yourself up to God in such a Manner, as never more to pretend to be your own: For the Rights of God are, like his Nature, Eternal and Immutable; and with regard to his Rational Creatures, are, the same Yesterday, to Dy, and for ever.

§. 5. I WOULD faither advise and urge, that this Dedication may be made with all possible Solemnity. Do it in express Words. And perhaps, it may be in many Cases most expedient, as many pious Divines have recommended, to do it in Writing. Set your Hand and Seal to it, "that on such a Day of such a Month and Year," and at such a Place, on full Consideration and serious Resection, you came to this happy Resolution, that "whatever others might do, you would serve the Lord (p)."

§. 6. Such an Instrument, you may, if you please, draw up for yourself; or if you rather chuse to have it drawn up to your Hand, you may find fomething of this Nature below, in which you may eafily make fuch Alterations as shall suit your Circumstances, where there is any Thing peculiar in them. But whatever you use, weigh it well, meditate attentively upon it, that you may not be raft with your Mouth to utter any Thing tefore GOD (e). And when you determine to execute this Infrument, let the Transaction be attended with some more than ordinary Religious Retirement. Make it, if you conveniently can, a Day of Secret Falling and Prayer: And when your Heart is prepared with a becoming Awe of the Divine Majesty, with an humble Confidence in his Goodness, and an earnest Defire of His Favour, then present yourself on your Knees before God, and read it over deliberately and folemnly; and when you have figned it, lay it by in some secure Place,

Chap. 17. An Instrument proposed, as proper for it. 164 where you may review it whenever you please; and make it a Rule with yourself to review it, if possible, at certain Seasons of the Year, that you may keep up the Remembrance of it.

§ 7. At least take this Course, till you see your Way clear to the Table of the Lord, where you are to renew the same Covenant, and to seal it, with more as seeding Solemnities. And God grant that you may be enabled to keep it, and in the whole of your Conversation to walk according to it! May it be an Anchor to your Soul in every Temptation, and a Cordial to it in every Affliction! May the Recollection of it embolden your addresses to the Throne of Grace now, and give additional Strength to your departing Spirit, in a Consciousness that it is ascending to your Covenant God and Father, and to that gracious Redeemer, whose Power and Faithfulness will securely keep what you commit to Him unto that Day (1)!

An Example of SELF-DEDICATION, or a Solemn Form of renewing our Covenant to the GOD.

TERNAL and unchangeable JEHOVAH! Thou or great Creator of Fleaven and Earth, and adorable Lord of Angels and Men! I defire, with the deepelt Humiliation and Abasement of Soul, to fall down at this Time in thine awful Prefence; and earnestly pray, that Thou wilt penetrate my very Heart with a suitable Sense of Thine unutterable and inconceivable Glories!

"Trembling may jutily take hold upon me (g), when I a finful Worm prefume to lift up my Head to Thee, prefume to appear in Thy Majestick Presence on such an Occasion as this. Who am I, O Lord GOD, or what is my House (h)? What is my Nature or Descent, my Character and Desert, that I should speak of this, and desire that I may be one Party in a COVENANT, where thou, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, art the other! I biush, and am confounded, even to mention it before Thee. But, O Lord, great as is Thy Majesty, so also is Thy Mercy.

(1) 2 Tim, i. 12. (g) Job xx. 6. (h) 2 Sam. vii. 18.

162 A folemn Form of Self-Dedication, Chap. 17. "If Thou wilt hold Converse with any of Thy Crea-"tures, Thy superlatively exalted Nature must stoop. " must stoop infinitely low. And I know, that in and " thro' Jesus, the Son of thy Love, Thou condescendeft to vifit finful Mortals, and to allow their Approach " to Thee, and their Covenant Intercourse with Thee: " Nay, I know, that the Scheme and Plan is Thine own, " and that Thou hast graciously fent to propose it to " us; as none untaught by Thee would have been able " to form it, or inclined to embrace it, even when " actually proposed. "To thee therefore do I now come, invited by the " Name of thy Son, and trusting in His Righteonsness " and Grace. Laying myfelf at Thy Feet with Shame " and Confusion of Face, and Smiting upon my Breast, I " say with the Humble Publican, GOD be merciful to " me a Sinner (i)! I acknowledge, O Lord, that I " have been a great Transgressor. My Sins bave reach. " el unto Heaven (k), and mine Iniquities are lifted up " unto the Skies (1). The irregular Propentities of my " corrupted and degenerate Nature have, in Ten Thoufand aggravated Instances, wrought to bring forth

of Guilt, and immediately fink into Destruction. But Thou hast graciously called me to return unto Thee, tho' I have been a wandering Sheep, a prodigal Son, a backstiding Child (n). Behold therefore, O Lord, I come unto Thee, I come, convinced not only of my Sin, but of my Folly. I come from my very Heart ashamed of myself, and with an Acknowledg-

" Fruit unto Death (m). And if Thou shouldst be strict

ment in the Sincerity and Humility of my Soul, that "I have played the Fool, and have erred exceedingly (0).

I am co-founded myself at the Remembrance of these Things: But be Thou merciful to my Unrighteousness,

and do not remember against me my Sins, and my Transgressions (p)! Permit me, O Lord, to bring back unto

Thee those Powers and Faculties, which I have ungratefully and facrilegiously alienated from Thy Service;

⁽i) Luke xviii. 13. (k) Rev. xviii. 5. (i) Jer. li. 9. (n) Rom. viii. 5. (n) Jer. iii. 22. (o) 1 Sam. x xvi. 21. (p) Heb. viii. 12.

Chap. 17. by which the Covenant may be renewed 163 " Service; and receive, I befeech Thee, thy poor re-" volted Creature, who is now convinced of thy Right " to him, and defires nothing in the whole World fo " mu h, as to be Thine! " Blessed Goo, it is with the utmost Solemnity that "I make this Surr nder of myfelf unto Thee. Hear, " O Heavens, and give Ear O Earth: I avouch the " Lord this Day to be my GOD (q); and I avouch and " declare myself this Day, to be one of His Covenant-" Children and People. Hear, O Thou God of Hea-" ven, and record it in the Book of the Remembrance (r), " that henceforth I am Thine, enti y Thine. I would not merely confecrate unto Thee fome of my Powers, " or some of my Possessions; or give thee a certain " Proportion of my Services, or all I am capable of for " a limited Time; but I would be subolly Thine, and " Thine for ever. From this Day do I folemnly re-" nounce all the former Lords which bave bad Domini-" on over me (s), every Si and every Luft; and bid, in "Thy Name, an Eternal Defiance to the Powers of " Hell, which have most unjustly usurped the Empire " over my Soul, and to all the Corruptions which their " fatal Temptations have introduced into it. The whole " Frame of my Nature, all the Faculties of my Mind, " and all the Members of my Body would I present be-" fore Thee this Day, as a living Sacrifice, holy and ac-" ceptable unto GOD, which I know to be my most rea-" fonable Service (t). To Thee I confecrate all my " worldly Possessions: In the Service I defire to spend " all the Remainder of my Time upon Earth, and beg "Thou wouldst instruct and influence me, so that, whe-" ther my Abode here be longer or shorter, every Year, " and Month, every Day and Flour, may be used in such " a Manner as shall most effectually promote thine Ho-" nour, and subserve the Schemes or thy wife and gra-" cious Providence. And I earnestly pray, that what-" ever Influence Thou givelt me over others, in any of " the superior Relations of Life in which I may stand,

" or in Confequence of any peculiar Regard which may be paid to me, Thou wouldst give me Strength and

⁽q) Deut. xxvi. 17. (r) Mal. iii. 16. (s) Ifai. xxvi. 13. (t) Rom, xii. 1.

A folemn Form of Self-Dedication, Chap. 17. 164 " Courage to exert my feif to the utmoft, for Thy Glory: " Resolving not only that I will myself do it, but that " all others, fo far as I can rationally and properly in-" fluence them, foat ferve the Lord (u). In this Courfe, " O Blessed Goo, would I steadily persevere to the very " End of my Life; earnest y praying, that every future Day of it may supply the Deficiencies, and correct the Irregularities of the former; and that I may by " Divine Grace be enabled, not only to hold on in that " happy Way, but daily to grow more active in it! " Nor do I only confecrate all that I am, and have, " to Thy Service; but I also most humbly resign, and " fub mit to thine boly and Sovereign Will, my felf, and " all that I can call mine. I leave, O Lord, to Thy " Management and Direction, all I possess, and all I " wish ; and set every Enjoyment and every Interest be-" fore Thee, to be disposed of as thou pleasest. Con-" tinue or remove, what thou halt given me; beltow, " or refuse, what I imagine I want, as thou, Lord, " shalt fee good! And tho' I dare not fay, I will never " repine; yet I hope I may venture to fay, that I will " labour, not only to submit, but to acquiesce; not only " to bear what Thou doest in thy most afflictive Dis-" pensations, but to confent to it, and to praise Thee for it; " contentedly resolving, in all that Thou appointed for " me, my Will into Thine, and looking on myself as " Nothing, and on Thee O God, as the great Eternal " ALL, whose Word ought to determine every Thing, " and whose Government ought to be the Joy of the " whole Rational Creation. " Use me, O Lord, I beseech Thee, as the Instru-" ment of thy Glory; and honour me fo far, as, either " by doing or fuffering what Thou shalt appoint, to " bring some Revenue of Praise to Thee, and of Bene-" fit to the World in which I dwell! And may it please ', Thee from this Day forward, to number me among " Thy peculiar People, that I may no more be a Stranger " and Foreigner, but a Fellow-Citizen with the Saints, " and of the Houlbold of GOD (w)! Receive, O Hea-" venly Father, Thy returning Prodigal! Wash me in .. the Blood of thy dear Son; clothe me with his per-" feet Righteousness; and fanctify me throughout by

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chap. 17. by which the Covenant may be renewed. 165

the Bower of Thy Spirit! Deltroy, I befeech Thee,
more and more the Power of Sin in mine Heart!

Transform me more into Thine own Image, and
fathion me to the Retemblance of Josus, whom hencetor vard I would acknowledge as my Teacher and
Sacrifice, my Interceffer and my Lord! Communicate to me, I befeech Thee, all needful Influences of
Thy purifying, Thy chearing, and Thy comforting
Spirit! And list up that Light of Thy Countenance upon
me, which will put the sublimest Joy and Gladness

" into my Soul (x) !

" Dispose my Affairs, O Goo, in a Manner which " m y be most subservient to Thy Glory and my own " trueit Happiness; and when I have done and borne " Thy Will upon Earth, call me from hence at what " Time, and in what Manner Thou pleasest: Only " grant that in my dying M ments, and in the near " Prospects of Evernity, I may remember these my En-" gagements to Thee, and may employ my latest Breath " in Thy Service! And do thou, Lord, when thou " feest the Agonies of dissolving Nature upon me, rs-" member this Covenant too, even tho' I should then be " incapable of recollecting it ! Look down, O my hea-" venly Father, with a pivying Eye upon Thy languish-" ing, Thy dying Child : place Thine Everlafting Arms " underneath me for my Support; put Strength and " Confidence into my departing Spirit; and receive it " to the Embraces of thine Everlasting Love! Wel-" come it to the Abodes of them that fleep in fesus (y). " to wait with them that glorious Day, when the last " of Thy Promises to Thy Covenant People shall be " fulfilled in their triumphant Resurrection, and that " abundant Entrance, which shall be administered to them " into that Everlafting Kingdom (z), of which Thou " hast assured them by thy COVENANT, and in the Hope of which I now lay bold on it, desiring to live " and to die, as with mine Hand on that Hope!

"And when I am thus numbered among the Dead, and all the Interests of Mortality are over with me for ever, if this folern Me notical should chance to fall

[&]quot; into the Hands of any surviving Friends, may it be

⁽x) Pfal. iv. 6, 7.

⁽y) 1 Theff, iv. 14.

N. B. For the Sake of those who may think the preceding Form of Self-Dedication too long to be transcribed (as it is probable many will,) I have at the Desire of a much esteemed Friend, added the following Abridgment of it, which should by all Means be attentively weighed in every Clause, before it is executed; and any Word or Phrase which may seem liable to Exception, changed, that the whole Heart may consent to it all.

"Eternal and ever-bleffed God! I defire to present myself before Thee, with the deepest Hamiliation and Abasement of Soul; sensible how unworthy such a sinful Worm is, to appear before the Holy Majesty of Heaven, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and especially on such an Occasion as this, even to enter into a Covenant Transaction with Thee. But the Scheme, and Plan, is Thine own. Thine infinite Condescension hath offered it by Thy Son, and Thy Grace bath inclined my Heart to accent of it.

Grace hath inclined my Heart to accept of it.

I come therefore, acknowledging myleif to have
been a great Offender; Imiting upon my Breaft, and Jaying with the humble Publican, GOD be merciful to me
a Sinner! I come invited by the Name of Thy Son,
and wholly trusting in His perfect Right-eousnels; intreating that for His Sake Th u will be merciful to
my Unrighteousness, and wilt no more remember my Sins.
Receive, I beleech Thee, Thy revolted Creature.

" who is now convinced of Thy Right to him, and de-If fires nothing fo much as that he may be Thine !

" This Day do I, with the utmost Solemnity, furren-" der myfelf to Thee. I renounce all former Lords that " have bad Dominion over me; and I consecrate to Thee all that I am, and all that I have; the Faculties of my " Mind, the Members of my Body, my worldly Poffef-" sions, my Time, and my Influence over others; to " be all used entirely for thy Glory, and resolutely em-" ployed in Obedience to thy Commands, as long as " Thou continuelt me in Life; with an ardent Defire " and humble Resolution to cortinue Thine, thro' all the " endless Ages of Eternity: Ever holding myself in an " attentive Polture to observe the first Intimations of " Thy Will, and ready to spring forward, with Zeal

" and Joy, to the immediate Execution of it.

" To thy Direction also I refign myself, and all I am " and have, to be disposed of by Thee in such a Minner, " as Thou halt in Thine infinite Wifdom judge most " subservient to the Purposes of thy Glory. To Thee " I leave the Management of all Events, and fay without Referve, Not my Will but Ibine be done ; rejoicing " with a loyal Heart in Thine unlimited Government, " as what ought to be the Delight of the whole Rational " Creation.

" Uie me, O Lord, I beseech Thee, as an Instrument o' of Thy Service! Number me among Thy peculiar " People! Let me be washed in the Blood of Thy dear " Son! Let me be cloathed with His Righteousness! " Let me be fanctified by His Spirit! Transform me " more and more into His Image! Impart to me, thro' " Him, all needful Influences of Thy purifying, chear-" ing, and comforting SPIRIT! And let my Life be " spent under those Influences, and in the Light of Thy

" gracious Countenance as my Father and my Goo! " And when the folemn Hour of Death comes, may " I remember this Thy Covenant, well ordered in " all i hings, and fure, as all my Salvation, and all my " Defire (a), tho' every other Hope and Enjoyment is " perishing; And do Thou, O Lord, remember it too! "Look down with Pity, O my Heavenly Father, on

thee, and by all those other Celestial Spirits, in whose Work and Blessedness thou shalt call them to

" fhare ! Amen."

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C H A P. XVIII.

Of entering into Church Communion by an Attendance upon the LORD'S SUPPER.

The Reader, being already supposed to have entered into Cowenant with GOD, §. 1. Is unged publickly to seal that
Engagement at the Table of the Lord: §. 2. (1.) From
a View of the Ends for which that Ordinance was instituted; § 3. Whence its Usefulness is strongly inferred,
§ 4. And, (2.) From the Authority of Christ's Appointment; which is solemnly pressed on the Conscience, §. 5.
Objections from Apprehensions of Unsitness, § 6. Weakness of Grace, &c. briefly answered, § 7. At least,
serious Thoughtfulness on this Subject is absolutely insisted
unon, § 8. The Chapter is closed with a Prayer for one,
who desires to attend, yet finds himself pressed with remaining Doubis.

I HOPE, this Chapter will find you by a most express Consent become one of God's Covenant People, solemnly and cordially devoted to His Service: And it is my hearty Prayer, that the Covenant you have made on Earth may be ratified in Heaven. But for your farther Instruction and Edification give me leave to remind you, that our Lord Jesus Christ hath appointed a peculiar Manner of expressing our Regard to Him, and of solemnly renewing our Covenant with Him; which, tho' it does not forbid any other proper Way of doing it, must by no means be set ande, or neglected, for any Human Methods, how prudent and expedient soever they may appear to us.

§. 2. OUR LORD has wifely ordained, that the Advantages of Society should be brought into Religion; and

as by his Command professing Christians assemble together for other Acts of publick Worship, so he has been pleased to institute a Social Ordinance, in which a whole Assembly of them is to come to his Table, and there to eat the same Bread, and drink the same Cup. And this they are to do, as a Token of their affectionate Remembrance of His dring Love, of their solemn Surrender of themselves to God, and of their sincere Love to one another,

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and to all their Fellow Christians.

§. 3. THAT these are indeed the great Ends of the Lord's Supper, I shall not now stay to argue at large. You need only read what the Apostle Paul hath written in the Tenth and Eleventh Chapters of his First Episte to the Corinthians, to convince you fully of this. He there expressly tells us, that our Lord commanded the Bread to be eaten, and the Wine to be drank, in Remembrance of Him (a), or as a Commemoration or Memorial of Him: so that as often as we attend this Institution, we show forth our Lord's Death, which we are to do even until He come (b). And it is particularly afferted, that the Cup is the New Testament in his Blood (c); that is, it is a Seal of that Covenant which was ratified by his Blood. Now it is evident, that in Consequence of this, we are to approach it with a View to that Covenant, defiring its Bleffings, and resolving by Divine Grace to comply with its Demands. On the whole, therefore as the Apostie speaks, we have Communion in the Body, and the Blood of Christ (d), and partaking of his Table and of his Cup, we converse with Christ, and join ourselves to Him as his People; as the Heathens in their idolatrous Rites, had Communion with their Deities, and joined themselves to them; and the Jews by eating their Sacrifices, conversed with JEHOVAH, and joined themfelves to him. He farther reminds them, that the' many, they were one Bread and one Body, being all Partakers of that one Bread (e), and being all made to drink into one Spirit (f); that is, meeting together as if they were but one Family, and joining in the Commemoration of that one Blood which was their common Ranfom, and of their Lord Jesus their common Head. Now it is evident,

⁽a) 1 Cor. xi. 24. 25. (b) Ver. 26. (c) Ver. 251 (d) 1 Cor. x. 16. (e) 1 Cor. x. 17. (f) 1 Cor. xii. 13.

Chap. 18. by an Attendance on the Lord's Table. 171 dent, all these reasonings are equally applicable to

Christians in succeeding Ages. Permit me therefore, by the Authority of our Divine Matter, to press upon

you the Observation of this Precept.

6.4. And let me also u ge it, from the apparent Tendency which it has to promote your trueft Advantage. You are fetting out in the Chritian Life; and I have reminded you at large, of the Opposition you must expect to meet with in it It is the Love of Christ which must animate you to break theo' all What then can be more defirable than to bear about with you a lively Sense of it? and what can awaken that Sense more than the Contemplation of his Death as there represented? Who can behold the Bread brok n, and the Wine poured out, and not reflect how the Body of the Bested Fesus was even tern in Pieces by his Sufferings and his facred Blood poured forth like Water on the Ground? Who can think of the Heart rending Agonies of the Son of Gou. as the Price of our Redemption and Salvation, and not feel his soul mel ed with Tendernels, and inflamed with grateful Affection? What an ex lt d View doth it give us of the Bieffings of the Gofper covenant, when we consider it as established in the Blood of GOD's only begotten Son? And when we make our Approach to Gon as our Heavenry Father, and give up ourselves to his Service in this folemn Manner, what an awful Tendency has it, to fix the Conviction that we are not our own, being bought with fuch a Price (g)? vnat a Tendency has it, to guard us against every Temptation to those Sins which we have so solemnly renounced, and to engage our Fidelity to Him to whom we have bound our Souls as with an Oath? Well may our Hearts be knit together in mutual Love (h), when we confider ourselves as one in Christ (i): His Blood becomes the Cement of the Society, joins us in Spirit, not only to each other, but to all that in every Place call upon the Name of Jefus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours (k): And we anticipate, in pleafing Hope, that Bleffed Day, when the Affembly shall be compleat, and we shall all be for ever with the Lord (1). Well may these Views engage us to deny

(i) Gal. iii. 28.

⁽k) 1 Cor. vi. 19, 10.

⁽h) Col. ii. 2.

deny ourselves, and to take up our Cross to follow our crucified Master (m): Well may they engage us to do our utmost by Prayer and all other suitable Endeavours, to serve his Followers and his Friends; to serve those whom he hath purchased with his Blood, and who are to be his Associates, and ours, in the Glories of an happy

Immortality.

§. 5. It is also the express Institution and Command of our Bieffed Redeemer, that the Members of fuch Societies should be tenderly solicitous for the spiritual Welfare of each other: And that, on the whole, his Churches may be kept pure and holy, that they should withdraw themselves from every Brother that walked disorderly (n); that they should mark such as cause Offences or Scandals among them, contrary to the Doctrine which they have learned, and avoid them (0); that if any obey not the Word of Christ by his Apostles; they should have no Fellowship or Communion with fuch, that they may be ashamed (p); that they should not eat with such, as are notoriously irregular in their Behaviour, but on the contrary, should put away from among themselves such wicked Persons (q) It is evident therefore, that the Institution of such Societies is greatly for the Honour of Christianity, and for the Advantage of its particular professors. And consequently, every Consideration of Obedience to our common Lord, and of prudent Regard to our own Benefit and that of our Breth:en, will require, that those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity, should enter into them, and affemble among them in these their most folemn and peculiar Acts of Communion at his Table.

§. 6. I INTREAT you therefore, and, if I may prefume to say it, in bis Name, and by bis Authority I
charge it on your Conscience, that this Precept of our
dying Lord go not, as it were, for nothing with you;
but that, if you indeed love bim, you keep this, as well
as the rest of bis Commandments.—I know you may
be ready to form Objections. I have elsewhere debated
many of the Chief of them at large, and I hope, not
without some good Effect*. The great Question is that
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⁽m) Matt. xvi. 24. (n) 2 Theff. iii. 6. (o) Rom. xvi. 17. (p) 2 Theff. iii. 14. (q) 1 Cor. v. 11, 13.

** See the Fourth of my Sermons to young Persons.

Chap. 18. and the Objections to it briefly answered. which relates to your being prepared for a worthy Attendance: And in Conjunction with what has been faid before, I think that may be brought to a very short Isfue! Have you, so far as you know your own Heart, been sincere in that deliberate Surrender of yourself to GOD, thro' Christ, which I recommended in the former Chapter? If you have, (whether it were with or without the particular Form or Manner of doing it there recommended.) you have certainly taken hold of the Covenant, and therefore have a right to the Seal of it. And there is not, and cannot be any other View of the Ordinance, in which you can have any farther Objection to it. If you defire to remember Chrift's Death, if you defire to renew the Dedication of yourself to Goo thro' Him, if you would list yourself among His People, if you would love them and do them Good according to your Ability, and, on the whole, would not allow yourfelf in the Practice of any one known Sin, or in the Omission of one known Duty, then I will venture confidently to fay, not only that you may be welcome to the Ordinance, but that it was instituted for such as you.

§. 7. As for other Objections, a few Words may fuffice by Way of Reply. The Weakness of the Religious Principle in your Soul, if it be really implanted there, is so far from being an Argument against your seeking fuch a Method to strengthen it, that it rather strongly inforces the Necessity of doing it .- The Neglect of this Solemnity, by so many that call themselves Chrikians, should rather engage you so much the more to distinguish your Zeal for the Institution, in this Respect so much flighted and injured. - And as for the Fears of Aggravating Guilt in Case of Apostacy, do not indulge them. This may, by the Divine Bleffing, be an effectual Remedy against the Evil you fear; and it is certain, that after what you must already have known and felt, before you could be brought into your present Situation, (on the Suppositions I have now been making,) there can be no Room to think of a Retreat; no Room, even for the wretched Hope of being less miserable than the Generality of those that have perished. Your Scheme therefore must be, to make your Salvation as sure, and to make it as glerious as possible; and I know not any Appoint-

ment,

174 A Prayer for one, who defires to attend. Chap. 18. ment of our blessed Redeemer, which may have a more comfortable Aspect upon that blessed End, than this

which I am recommending to you.

6. 8. ONE Thing I would at least infift upon, and I fee not with what Face it can be denied. I mean, that you should take this Matter into a serious Consideration: That you should diligently enquire, "whether you " have Reason in your Conscience to believe, it is the " Will of God you should now approach to the Or-" dinance or not:" And that you should continue your Reflections, your Enquiries and your Prayers, till you find farther Encouragement to come, if that Encouragement be hitherto wanting. For of this be affured, that a State in which you are on the whole unfit to approach this Ordinance, is a State in which you are destitute of the necessary Preparations for Death and Heaven; in which therefore, if you would not allow yourselves to flumber on the Brink of Destruction, you ought not to rest to much as one single Day.

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A PRAYER for one, who earnefly defires to approach the Table of the Lord, yet has some remaining Doubts concerning his Right to that solemn Ordinance.

" DLESSED LORD, I adore thy wife and gra-D "cious Appointments, for the Edification of Thy " Church in Holiness and in Love. I thank Thee, that "Thou halt commanded Thy Servants, to form them-6. felves into Societies; and I adore my gracious Saviour, " who both instituted, as with His dying Breath, the " holy Solemnity of His Supper, to be theo' all Ages a . Memorial of His dying Love, and a Bond of that Union " which it is His Sovereign Pleasure that His People " should preserve. I hope, Thou, Lord, art Witness to the Sincerity, with which I defire to give myly " up to Thee; and that I may call Thee to record in " my Soul, that if I now hefitate about this particular " Manner of doing it, it is not because I would allow " myfelf to break any of Thy Comm ands; or to flight " any of Thy Favours. I trust Thou knowest that " my present Delay arries only from my Uncertainty as to my Duty, and a Fear of profaning. Holy Things

"fully constrain my Soul, that my own growing Expeperience may put it out of all Question, that I am one
of those for whom He intended this Feast of Love!

"And even now, as joined to Thy Churches in Spirit
and in Love, tho' not in so express and intimate a Bond

(r) Pfal. xxvi. 2.

176 A Prayer for one who defires to attend. Chap. 18 " as I could wish, would I heartily pray, that The .. Bleffing may be on all Thy People: That thou wouldst " feed Thine Heritage, and lift them up for ever (t)! "May every Christian Society flourish in Knowledge, in " Holiness, and in Love! May all Thy Priests be cloathed " with Salvation, that by their Means Thy chefen People " may be made joyful (u)! And may there be a glori-" ous Accession to thy Churches every where, of those " who may fly to them as a Cloud, and as Doves to their " Windows (w)! May Thy Table, O Lord, be fur-" nifeed with Guefts (x); and may all that love Thy Salwation, fay, Let the Lord be magnified, who bath " Pleasure in the Prosperity of his Servants (y) ! And I earnesly pray, that all who profess to have received " Christ Jesus the Lord, may be duly careful to walk in bim (z); and that we may all be preparing for the " general Affembly of the First-torn, and may join in " that nobier and more immediate Worthe, where all " these Types and Shadows shall be laid afide : where " even these Memorials shall be no longer necessary; " but a living, present Redeemer shall be the everlast-" ing Joy of those, who here in his Abience have de-" lighted to commemorate his Death! Amen.

(t) Pfal. xviii. 9.

(v) Pfal. exxxii. 16, (y) Pfal. xxxv. 27. (w) Ifai, lx. 8 (2) Cos. is. 6

N. B. I purposed to have added something here, concerning a regular Approach to the Lord's Table, a proper detendance upon it, and sustable Restellions after it: But I find this Work swell under my Hand, beyond what I at first expected; and therefore, as these Articles have been handled by so many valuable Writers, I chuse to reserve to them, and particularly to Dr. Earle's Sacramental Exercises, and Mr. Grove's Devotional Exercises relating to the Lord's Super: Books which think remarkably excellent in their King, and which may be had at very easy Rates. Yet for the farther Assistance of devout Communicants, I have some Thoughts of publishing a small Volume of Sacramental Meditations on select Texts of Scripture, if God spare me to finish my Exposition ou the New Testamens, and some other Pieces, which I have now in Hand.

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CHAP. XIX.

Some more particular Directions for maintaining continual Communion with God, or being in his Fear all the Day long.

A Letter to a pious Friend on this Subject introduced here, §. 1. A General Plan of Directions, § 2. [1.] For the Beginning of the Day: §. 3. (1.) Lifting up the Heart to GOD at our first Awakening: §. 4. (2.) Setting our felves to the feeret Devotions of the Morning; ness in Devotion, S. 12. (2.) Diligence in Bufiness, 1. 13. (3) Prudence in Recreations, §. 14. (4.) Observation of Providences, §. 15. (5-) Watchfulness against Temptations, §. 16. (6.) Dependence on Divine Influences, § 17. (7.) Government of the Thoughts when in Solitude, S. 18. (8) Management of Discourse in Company, § 19 [III] For the Conclusion of the Day : § 20. (1) With the jecret Devotions of the Evening, §. 21. Directions for Self-Examination at-large, §. 22, 23. (2) Lying down with a proper Temper, §. 24. Conclusion of the Letter, §. 25. and of the Chapter : §. 26. With a serious View of Death, proper to be taken at the Close of the day.

WOULD hope, that upon ferious Consideration, beif Examination, and Prayer, the Reader may by this me be come to a kerolution to attend the Table of the Lord, and to feal his Vows, there now suppose that folemn Transaction to be over, or some 1 3

Circumstances in Life, considering it as if addressed to

himself.—I say, (and desire it may be observed,) that I wish my Reader may act on these Directions, so far as they may properly suit his Capacities and Circumstances in Life; for I would be far from laying down the following Particulars as universal Rules for all, or for any one Person in the World at all Times. Let them be practised by those that are able, and when they have Leisure: And when you cannot reach them all, come as near the most important of them as you conveniently

which I would hope, after this previous Care to guard against the Danger of mistaking it, will not discourage any the weakest Christian. Let us humbly and chearfully do our best, and rejoice that we have so gracious a Father who knows all our Infirmities, and so compassionate an High-Priest to recommend to Divine Acceptance the

feebleit Efforts of fincere Duty and Love!

(a) Prov. xxiii. 17.

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[.] N. B. It was in the Year 1727.

My Dear Friend,

Since you defire my Thoughts in Writing, and at large, on the Subject of our late Conversation, viz. " By what particular Methods in our daily Conduct, a " Life of Devotion and Usefulness may be most hap-" pily maintained and fecured?" I fet myself with Chearfulness, to recollect and digest the Hints which I then gave you; hoping it may be of some Service to you in your most important Interest; and may also fix on my own Mind a deeper Sense of my Obligations to govern my own Life by the Rules I offer to others. I esteem Attempts of this Kind among the pleafintest Fruits, and the furest Cements of Friendship, and as I hope ours will last for ever, I am persuaded a mutual Care to cherish Sentiments of this Kind will add everlasting Endearments to it.

§. 2. THE Directions you will expect from me on this Occasion, naturally divide themselves into Three Heads, How we are to regard Goo, _____in the Beginning, ----the Progress, and the Close of the Day. I will open my Heart freely to you with Regard to each, and will leave you to judge how far these Hints may suit your Circumstances; aiming at least to keep between the Extremes, of a superstitious Strechness in Trifles, and of an indolent Remissnets, which if admitted in little Things, may draw after it criminal Neglects, and

at length more criminal Indulgences.

- 9. 3. [1.] In the Beginning of the Day: It should certainly be our Care, to lift up our Hearts to GOD, as loon as we wake, and while we are riting; -- and then, to fer ourselves seriously and immediately to the. fecret Devotions of the Morning.
- §. 4. For the first of these, it seems exceedingly natural. There are so many Things that may suggest a great Variety of Pious Reflections and Ejaculations, which are so obvious, that one would think a serious Mind could hardly mis them. The Ease and Chearfulnels of our Mind at our first Awakening; the Retresh-

Particular Advices given, with Respect Chap. 19. ment we find from Sleep; the Security we have enjoyed in that defenceless State; the Provision of warm and decent Apparel; the chearful Light of the returning Sun; or even (which is not unfit to mention to you,) the Contrivances of Art, taught and furnished by the great Author of all our Conveniencies, to supply us with many useful Hours of Life in the Absence of the Sun; the Hope of returning to the dear Society of our Friends; the Prospect of spending another Day, in the Service of Goo, and the Improvement of our own Minds; and above all the lively Hope of a joyful Refurrection to an Eternal Day of Happiness and Glory: Any of these Particulars, and many more which I do not mention, may furnish us with Matter of pleafing Reflection and chearful Praise, while we are rifing. And for our further Affistance, when we are alone at this Time, it may not be improper to freak fometimes to ourselves, and sometimes to our Heavenly Father, in the natural Expressions of Joy and Thank-Permit me, Sir, to add, that if we find our fulnels. Hearts in such a Frame at our first Awakening, even that is just Matter of Praise, and the rather, as perhaps it is an Answer to the Prayer with which we lay down.

§. 5. For the Exercise of secret Devotions in the Morning, which I hope will generally be our first Work, I cannot prescribe an exact Method to another. You must, my dear Friend, consult your own Taste in some Measure. The constituent Parts of the Service, are in the general Plain. Were I to propose a particular Model for those, who have Half, or Three Quarters of an Hour at Command, (which with prudent Conduct I suppose most

may have) it should be this.

6. 6. To begin the stated Devotions of the Day with a selemn Act of Praise, offered to God on our Knees, and generally with a low, yet distinct Voice; acknowledging the Mercies, we had been restecting on while rising; never forgetting to mention Christ, as the great Foundation of all our Enjoyments and our Hopes, or to return Thanks for the Influences of the Biessed Spirit, which have led our Hearts to God, or are then engaging us to seek him. This, as well as other Offices of Devotion afterwards mentioned, must be done attentively and sincerely; for not to offer our Praises Leartily, is in

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Chap. 19. to the fecret Devotions of the Morning. 181 the Sight-of God not to praise him at all. This Address of Praise may properly be concluded with an express Renewal of our Covenant with God, declaring our continued repeated Resolution of being devoted to him, and particularly of living to his Glory the ensuing Day.

of the Day tefore us, so far as we can probably foresee in the general, where and how it may be spent; and seriously to reslect, "How shall I employ myself for Gou this Day? What Business is to be done, and in what Order? What Opportunities may I expect, either of doing, or of receiving Good? What Temptations am I like to be assumed with, in any Place, Company, or Circumstance, which may probably occur? in what Instances have I lately failed? And how shall I be safest now?"

§. 8. AFTER this Review, it would be proper to offer up a fbort Prayer, begging, that God would quicken us to each of these foreseen Duties, that he would fortify us against each of those apprehended Dangers; that he would grant us Success in such or such a Business undertaken for his Glory; and also, that he would help us to discover and improve unforeseen Opportunities, to resist unexpected Temptations, and to bear patiently, and religiously, any Afslictions which may surprize us

in the Day on which we are entering.

6. 9 I would advise you after this to read some Portion of Scripture; not a great deal, nor the whole Bible in its Course; but some select Lessons out of its most nieful Parts, perhaps Ten or Twelve Verses; not troubling yourfelf much about the exact Connection, or other Critical Niceties, which may occur, (tho' at other Times I would recommend them to your Enquiry, as you have Ability and Opportunity;) but confidering them merely in a devotional and practical View. Here take such Instructions as readily present themselves to your Thoughts. Repeat them over to your own Confcience, and charge your Heart religiously to observe them. and act upon them, under a Sense of the Divine Authority which attends them. And if you pray over the Sub. flance of this Scripture with your Bible open before you, it may impress your Memory and your Heart yet

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more deeply, and may form you to a Copiousness and Variety, both of Thought and Expression in Prayer.

§ 10. It might be proper to close these Devotions with a Pfalm or Hymn: And I rejoice with you, that thro' the pious Care of Dr Watts, and some other Sacred Poets, we are provided with so rich a Variety for the Assistance of the Closet and Family on these Occasions, as well as for the Service of the Sanctuary.

6. 11. [II.] THE most material Directions which have occurred to me, relating to the Progress of the Day, are these; That we be ferious in the Devotions of the Day; --- that we be diligent in the Business of it, that is, in the Profecution of our worldly Callings; -- that we be temperate and prudent in the Recreations of it; -- that we carefully remark the Providences of the Day; that we cautiously guard against the Temptstions of it; -- that we keep up a lively and humble Dependance upon the Divine Influence, suitable to every Emergency of it; —that we govern our Thoughts well in the Solitude of the Day, --- and our Discourses well in the Conversations of it. These, Sir, were the Heads of a Sermon which you lately heard me preach on this Occasion, and to which I know you referred in that Request which I am now endeavouring to answer. I will therefore touch upon the most material Hints, which fall under each of these Particulars.

S. 12. (1.) For Seriousness in Devotion, whether Publick or Domestick! Let us take a few Moments, before we enter upon such Solemnities, to pause, and reflect, on the Perfections of the God we are addressing to, on the Importance of the Business we are coming about, on the Pleasure and Advantage of a regular and devout Attendance, and on the Guilt and Folly of an Hypocritical Formality. When engaged, let us maintain a strict Watchfulness over our own Spirits, and check the first Wanderings of Thought. And when the Duty is over, let us immediately resect on the Manner in which it has been performed, and ask our own Consciences whether we have reason to conclude, that we are accepted of GOD in it? For there is a certain Manner of going thro' these Offices, which our own Hearts will immediately tell us,

Chap. 19. with particular Advices on the Head. 183 it is imperfible for GOD to approve: And if we have in-advertently fallen into it, we ought to be deeply humbled before God for it, lest our very Prayer become Sin. (b).

whether it be, as with you, that of the Hands; or whether it be, the Labour of a lea ned Life, not immediately relating to Religious Matters: Let us fet to the Profecution of it with a Sense of God's Authority, and with a Regard to his Glory. Let us avoid a Dreaming, Sluggith, Indolent Temper, which node over its Work, and does only the Business of One Hour in Two or Three. In Opposition to this, which runs thro' the Life of some People, who yet think they are never Idle, let us endeavour to dispatch as much as we well can in a little Time; considering, that it is but a little we have in all. And let us be habitually sensible of the Need we have of the Divine Blessing, to make our Labours successful.

§. 14. (3.) For Seasons of Diversion: Let us take Care, that our Recreations be well chosen; that they be pursued with a good Intention, to sit us for a renewed Application to the Labours of Life; and thus, that they be only used in Subordination to the Honour of God, the great End of all our Actions. Let us take Heed, that our Hearts be not estranged from God by them; and that they do not take up too much of our Time: Always remembering, that the Faculties of the Human Nature, and the Advantages of the Christian Revelation, were not given us in vain; but that we are always to be in Pursuit of some great and honourable End, and to indulge ourselves in Amusements and Diversions no farther, than as they make a Part in a Scheme of rational and many, benevolent and pious Conduct.

of 15. (4) For the Objervation of Providences: It will be useful to regard the Divine Interposition in our Comforts and in our Afflictions. In our Comforts, whether more common or extraordinary: That we find our selves in continued Health; that we are surnished with Food for Support and Pleasure; that we have so many agreeable Ways of employing our Time; that we have so many Friends, and those so good, and so happy; that our Business goes on prosperously; that we go

Temptations should be watched against, Chap. 19. out and come in fafely; and that we enjoy Composure and Chearfulness of Spirit, without which nothing else could be enjoyed: All these should be regarded as Providential Farours; and due Acknowledgments should be made to God on these Accounts, as we pass thro' such agreeable Scenes. On the other Hand, Providence is to be regarded in every Disappointment, in every Loss, in every Pain, in every Inflance of Unkindness, from those who have professed Friendship: And we should endeayour to argue ourselves into a patient Submission, from this Confideration, that the Hand of GOD is always mediately, if not immediately in each of them; and that if they are not properly the Work of Providence, they are at least under its Direction. It is a Resection, which we should particularly make with Relation to those little cross Accidents, (as we are ready to call them,) and those Infirmities and Follies in the Temper and Conduct of our intimate Friends, which may else be ready to discompose us. And it is the more necessary to guard our Minds here, as wife and good Men often lose the Command of themselves on these comparatively little Occasions; who calling up Reason and Religion to their Assistance, stand the Shock of great Calamines with Fortitude and Resolution.

§. 16. (5.) For Watchfulness against Temptations: It is necessary, when changing our Place, or our Employment, to reflect, "What Snares attend me here?" And as this should be our habitual Care, so we should especially guard against those Snares which in the Morning we foresaw. And when we are entering on those Circumstances in which we expected the Assault, we should reflect, especially if it be a Matter of great Importance, Now the Combat is going to begin: Now God and the Blessed Angels are observing, what Constancy, what Fortitude there is in my Soul; and how far the Divine Authority, and the Remembrance of my own Prayers and Resolutions, will weigh with me, when

" it comes to a Trial."

f. 17. (6.) As for Dependance on Divine Grace, and Influence; it must be universal: And fince we always need it, we must never forget that Necessity. A Moment spent in humble servent Breathings after the Communications

Chap. 19. and divine Affifiance always fought. munications of the Divine Assistance may do more Good. than many Minutes spent in mere Reasonings : And tho' indeed this thould not be neglected, fince the Light of Reason is a Kind of Divine Illumination; yet still it ought to be pursued in a due Sense of our Dependance on the Father of Lights, or where we think our felves wifest, we may become vain in our Imaginations (c). Let us therefore always call upon GOD; and fay, for Inflance, when we are going to pray, "Lord fix my At-" tention! Awaken my holy Affections, and pour out " upon me the Spirit of Grace and of Supplication (d)!" When taking up the Bible, or any other good Book, " Open thou mine Eyes, that I may behold wondrous Things " out of thy Law (e) ! Enlighten mine Understanding! "Warm my Heart! May my good Resolutions be " confirmed, and all the Course of my Life in a proper " Manner regulated !" When addressing ourielves to any worldly Bufiness, " Lord profper Thou the Work of " mine Hands upon me (f), and give Thy Bleffing to my " honest Endeavours!" When going to any Kind of Recreation, "Lord bless my Refreshments! Let me " not forget Thee in them, but full keep Thy Glory " in View!" When coming into Company, " Lord, " may I do, and get Good! Let no corrupt Communica-" tion proceed out of my Muth, but that which is good to " the Use of editying, that it may minister Grace to the " Hearers (g) !" When entering upon Difficulties, " Lord, give me that Wijdom, which is profitable to " direct (h)! Teach me Thy Way, and lead me in a plain " Path (i) !" When encountering with Temptations, " Let Thy Strength, O gracious Redeemer, be made per-" feel in my Weakness (k !" Thefe Instances may illustrate the Defign of this Direction, tho' they be far from

§. 18. (7) For the Government of our Thoughts in Solitude: Let us accustom outlelves, on all Occasions, to exercise a due Command over our Thoughts. Let us take Care of those Entanglements of Passion, and those Attach-

a compleat Enumeration of all the Circumstances in

which it is to be regarded.

⁽c) Rom. i. 21, 22.

⁽d) Zech xii. 10.

⁽e) Pfal. cxix: 18. (h) Ecclef. x. 30.

⁽¹⁾ Plal. xc. 17. (1) I fal. xxvii. 11.

⁽g) Eph. iv. 29. (k) 2 Cor. xii. g.

The Thoughts and D fcourfes to be go verne 1. Chap. 19. 186 Attachments to any present Interest and View, which would deprive us of our Power over them. Let us fet before us some profiable Subject of Thought: Such as the Perfections of the Bleffed God, the Love of Chrift, the Value of Time, the Certainty and Importance of Death and Judgment, and the Evernity of Happinels o. Mifery which is to follow. Let us also at such Intervils reflect, on what we have observed as to the State of our own Souls, with Regard to the Advance or Decline of Religion; or on the last Sermon we have heard, or the last Portion of Scripture we have read. You may pe haps, in this Connection, Sir, recollect what I have (if I remember right,) proposed to you in Conversation; that it might be very useful to select some one Verse of Scripture, which we had met with in the Morning, and to treasure it up in our Mind, resolving to think of that at any Time when we are at a Loss for Matter of pious Reflection, in any Intervals of Leifure for entering upon it. This will often be as a Spring, from whence many profitable and delightful Thoughts may rife, which perhaps we did not before fee in that Connection and Force. Or if it should not be so, yet I am persuaded it will be much better to repeat the fame Scripture in our Mind an Hundred Times in a Day, with some pious Ejaculation formed upon it, than to leave our Thoughts at the Mercy of all those various Trifles, which may otherwise intrude upon us; the Variety of which will be far from making Amends for their Vanity.

one fe in Company: We should take great Care, that nothing may escape us, which can expose us, or our Christian Profession, to Censure and Repreach: Nothing in: jurious to those that are absent, or to those that are present; nothing malignant, nothing insincere; nothing which may corrupt, nothing which may provoke, nothing which may missend those about us. Nor should we, by any Means, be content, that what we say is innotent; it should be our Desire, that it may be edifying, to ourselve and others. In this View, we should endeavour to have some Subject of useful Discourse always ready; in which we may be assisted by the hints given about Furniture for Thought, under the former Head.

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We should watch for decent Opportunities of introducing useful Resections; and if a pious Friend attempt to do it, we should endeavour to second it immediately. When the Conversation does not turn directly on Religious Subjects, we should endeavour to make it improving some other Way: We should resect on the Character and Capacities of our Company, that we may lead them to talk of what they understand best; for their Discourses on these Subjects will probably be most pleasing to themselves as well as most useful to us. And in Paules of Discourse, it may not be improper to lift up an boly Ejaculation to God, that his Grace may assist us and our Friends in our Endeavours to do Good to each other; that all we say, and do, may be worthy the Character of reasonable Creatures and of Christians.

- §. 20. [III.] THE Directions for a religious Closing of the Day which I shall here mention, are only Fwo—Let us see to it, that the secret Duties of the Evening, be well performed. And let us lie down on our Beds in a pious Frame.
- §. 21. (1.) For fecret Devotion in the Evening, I would propole a Method fomething different from that in the Morning; but still, as then, with due Allowances for Circumstances, which may make unthought of Alterations proper. I should, Sir advise to read a Portion of Scripture in the first Place, with suitable Reflections, and Prayer as above: Then to read a Hymo, or Plalm: After this to enter on Self-Examination, to be followed by a longer Prayer, than that which followed Reading, to be formed on this Review of the Day: In this Address to the Throne of Grace it will be highly proper to intreat that God would pardon the Omissions and Offences of the Day; to praise Him for Mercies Temporal and Spiritual; to recommend ourselves to His Protection for the ensuing Night; with proper Petitions for others, whom we ought to bear on our tiearts before him; and particularly, for those rriends with whom we have conversed or corresponded, in the preceding Day. Many other Concerns will occur, both in Morning and Evening Prayer, which I have not here hinted at; but I did

did not apprehend that a full Enumeration of these Things belonged, by any Means, to our present Purpose.

§ 22. BEFORE I quit this Head, I mult take the Liberty to remind you, that Self-Examination is io impertant a Duty, that it will be weath our while to spend a few Words upon it. And this Branch of it so easy, that when we have proper Questions before us, any Perfon of a common Understanding may hope to go thro' it with Advantage under a Divine Bleffing. I offer you therefore the following Queries, which I hope you will, with fuch Alterations as you may judge requifite, keep near you for daily Use. " Did I awake as with God " this Morning, and rife with a grateful Sense of his "Goodness? How were the fecret Devotions of the " Morning performed? Did I offer my folemn Praises, " and renew the Dedication of myself to God, with becoming Attention and fuitable Affections? Did I " lay my Scheme for the Bufiness of the Day, wisely " and well? How did I read the Scripture, and any other " Devotional or Practical Piece, which I might after-" wards conveniently Review? Did it do my Heart good, " or was it a mere Amusement? --- How have the other flated Devotions of the Day been attended, whe-" ther in the Family or in Publick? Have I purfued " the common Business of the Day with Diligence " and Spirituality; doing every Thing in Seaton, and " with all convenient Dispatch, and as unto the Lord (1)? " What Time have I lost this Day, in the Morning or " the Forenoon, in the Afternoon, or the Evening;" (for these Divisions will assist your recollection;) " and " what has occasioned the Lots of it? With what Temer per, and under what Regulations, have the Recreations of this Day been purfued? Have I feen the Hand of " GOD in my Mercies, Health, Chearfulneis, Food, " Clothing, Books, Pretervation in Journies, Success of " Bufinets, Convertation and Kindness of Friends, Co.? " Have I feen it in Afflictions," and particularly in little " Things, which had a Tendency to vex and disquiet " me? And with regard to this Interpolition, have I " received my Comforts thankfully, and my Atslictions " submissively? How have I guarded against the Temp " lations " tations of the Day, particularly against this or that " Temptation, which I forefaw in the Morning? Have "I maintained an humble Dependance on Divine In-" fluences ? Have I lived by Fauth in the Son of GOD (m), " and regarded CHRIST this Day, as my Teacher and "Governor, my Atonement and Interceffor, my Ex-" ample and Guardian, my Strength and Forerunner! " Have I been looking forward to Death and Eternity " this Day, and confidered myfelf as a Probationer for " Heaven, and thro' Grace an Expectant of it? Have "I governed my Thoughts well, especially in such or " fuch an Interval of Solitude ? How was my Subject of Thought this Day chosen, and how was it regard-" ed? Have I governed my Discourses well, in such and " fuch Company? Did I say nothing passionate, mis-" chievous, slanderous, imprudent, impertinent? Has " my Heart this Day been full of Love to God, and " to all Mankind; and have I fought, and found, and " improved Opportunities of doing, and of getting " Good ?- With what Attention and Improvement " have I read the Scripture this Evening? How was Self-" Examination performed the last Night; and how have " I profited this Day by any Remarks I then made on " former Negligences and Miltakes? With what Temper " did I then lie down, and compose myself to Sleep."

1. 23. You will eafily fee, Sir, that these Questions are so adjusted, as to be an Abridgement of the most material Advices I have given in this Letter; and I believe I need not, to a Person of your Understanding, say any Thing as to the Usefulness of such Enquiries. Conscience will answer them in a few Minutes; but if you think them too large and particular, you may make a still shorter Abstract for daily Use, and reserve these, with such obvious Alteration as will then be necessary, for Seasons of more than ordinary Exactness in Review, which I hope will occur at least once a Week. Secret Devotion being thus performed, before Drowfinels render us unfit for it, the Interval between that and our going to Rest must be conducted by the Rules mentioned under the next Head. And nothing will farther remain to be confidered here, but

190 We Should lie down with a proper Temper. Ch. 19.

§. 24. (2.) THE Sentiments with which we should he down and compose ourselves to Sleep. Now here it is obviously suitable to think of the Divine Goodness, in adding another Day, and the Mercies of it to the former Days and Mercies of our Life; to take Notice of the Indulgence of Providence, in giving us commodious Habitations and easy Beds, and continuing to us such Health of Body, that we can lay ourfelves down at Eafe upon them, and such Serenity of Mind as leaves us any Room to hope for refreshing Sleep: A Refreshment to be fought, not merely as an Indulgence to Animal Nature, but as what our wife Creator, in order to keep us humble in the Midst of so many Infirmities, has been pleased to make necessary to our being able to pursue His Service with renewed Alacrity. Thus may our fleeping, as well as our waking Hours, be in some Sense devoted to God. And when we are just going to resign ourselves to the Image of Death, (to what one of the Antients beautifully calls its leffer Myseries,) it is also evidently proper to think feriously of that End of all the Living, and to renew those Actings of Repentance and Faith, which we should judge necessary, if we were to wake no more You have once, Sir, seen a Meditation of that Kind in my Hand, I will transcribe it for you in the Postfript; and therefore shall add no more to this Head, but here put a close to the Directions you desired.

§. 25. I AM persuaded the most important of them have in one Form or another, been long regarded by you, and made governing Maxims of your Life I shall greatly rejoice, if the Review of these, and the Examination and Trial of the rest, may be the Means of leading you into more intimate Communion with God, and so of rendering your Life more pleasant and useful, and your Eternity, whenever that is to commence, more glorious. There is not a Human Creature upon Earth, whom I should not delight to serve in these important Interests; but I can faithfully assure you, that I am,

with particular Respect,

Dear Sir,

Your very affectionate Friend and Servant.

Chap. 19. A View of Death, at the Clofe of the Day. 191

6. 26. This, Realer, with the Alteration of a very few Words, is the Letter I wrote to a worthy Friend, (now I doubt not with God,) about Sixteen Years ago: And I can afforedly fay, that the Experience of each of thefe Years has confirmed me in these Views, and established me in the Persuasion, "that one Day thus spent is pre-" ferable to whole Years of Senfuality, and the Neglect " of Religion." I chose to insert the Letter as it is, because I thought the Freedom and Particularity of the Advice I had given in it, would appear most natural in its original Form; and as I propose to-enforce these Advices in the next Chapter, I shall conclude this with that Meditation, which I promised my Friend as a Postfcript; and which I could with you, to make so familiar to yourself, as that you might be able to recollect the Substance of it, whenever you compose yourfelf to Sleep.

A serious VIEW OF DEATH, proper to be taken as we lie down on our Beds.

H my Soul, look forward a little with Serious-" ness and Attention, and learn Wisdom by the " Consideration of thy latter End (n). Another of thy " mortal Days is now numbered and finished: And as " I have put off my Clothes, and laid myself upon my " Bed, for the Repose of the Night; so will the Day " of Life, quickly come to its Period, fo must the Body " itself be put off, and laid to its Repose in a Bed of "Dust. There let it rest; for it will be no more re-" garded by me, than the Clothes which I have now " laid aside. I have another far more important Con-" cern to attend. Think, Oh my Soul, when Death " comes, thou art to enter upon the Eternal World, and " to be fixed either in Heaven or in Hell. All the " Schemes and Cares, the Hopes and Fears, the Plea-" fures and Sorrows of Life, will come to their Period, " and the World of Spirits will open upon thee. And " On, how foon may it open ! Perhaps before the return-" ing Sun bring on the Light of another Day. To-mor-" IOW'S

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192 A View of Death at the Close of the Day. Chap. 19. " row's Sun may not enlighten mine Eyes, but only " shine round a fenseless Corpse, which may lie in the " Place of this animated Body. At least the Death of " many in the Flower of their Age, and many who " were superior to me in Capacity, Piety, and the Pros-" pects of Ufefulness, may loudly warn me not to de-" pend on a long Life, and engageme rather to wonder " that I am continued here fo many Years, than to be " furprized if I am speedily removed.

" And now, Oh my Soul, answer as in the Sight of " Goo; Art thou ready? Art thou ready? Is there no " Sin unforsaken, and so unrepented of, to fill me with · Anguish in my departing Moments, and to make me " tremble on the Brink of Eternity? Dread to remain " under the Guilt of it, and this Moment renew thy " most earnest Applications to the Mercy of God, and " the Blood of a Redeemer, for Deliverance from it. " But if the great Account be already adjusted, if " thou hast cordially repented of thy numerous Offences, if thou haft fincerely committed thyfelf by s Faith into the Hands of the Bleffed Jesus, and haft not renounced Thy Covenant with Him, by return-" ing to the allowed Practice of Sin, then flart not at the Thoughts of a Separation: It is not in the Power of Death to hurt a Soul devoted to Gon, and united to the great Redeemer. It may take from me my " worldly Comforts; it may disconcert and break my Schemes for Service on Earth : But, Oh my Soul, " diviner Entertainments, and nobler Services wait thee " beyond the Grave. For ever bleffed be the Name of "Gop and the Love of Jesus, for these quieting, - encouraging, joyful Views! I will now lay me aoun " in Peace, and sheep (0), free from the Fears of what " thall be the Isue of this Night, whether Life or " Leath may be appointed for me. Father, into thine " Hand I commered my Spirit (p); tor 9 how haft reacemed " me, O GOD of Truth (9), and theretore I can chear-" fully refer it to Tay Choice, whether I shall wake " in this World, or another."

⁽o) Pfal. iv. 8. (p) Luke x xiii, 46. (q) Pfal. xxxi. 5

CHAP. XX.

A serious Persuasive to such a Method of spending our Days as is represented in the former Chapter.

Christians fix their Views too low, and include too indolent a Disposition, which makes it more necessary to urge such a Life, as that under Consideration, § 1, 2. It is therefore inforced. (1) From its being apparently Reasonable, considering ourselves as the Creatures of GOD, and as redeemed by the Blood of Christ, § 3. (2.) From its evident Tendency to conduce to our Comfort in Life, § 4. (3.) From the Influence it will have to promote our Usefulness to others, § 5. (4.) From its Essicacy to make Afflictions lighter, § 6 (5) From its happy Aspect on Death: § 7. And, (0.) On Eternity, § 8. Whereas not to desire Improvement would argue a Soul destitute of Religion, § 9. A Prayer suited to the State of a Soul, who longs to attain the Life recommended above.

I HAVE been assigning, in the preceding Chapter, what I sear will seem to some of my Readers so hard a Task, that they will want Courage to attempt it; and indeed it is a Life in many respects so far above that of the Generality of Christians, that I am not without Apprehensions, that many, who deserve the Name, may think the Directions, after all the Precautions with which I have proposed them, are carried to an unnecessary Degree of Nicety and Strictness. But I am persuaded much of the Credit and Comfort of Christianity is lost, in Consequence of its Professors fixing their Aims too low, and not conceiving of their bigb and boly Calling in so elevated and sublime a View as the Nature of Religion

The Reasonableness of such a Life, ligion would require, and the Word of Gon would direct. I am fully convinced, that the Expressions of walking with GOD, of being in the Fear of the Lord all the Day long (a), and above all, that of loving the Lord our GOD with all our Heart, and Soul, and Mind, and Strength (b), must require, if not all these - Circumstances, yet the Subflance of all that I have been recommending, fo far as we have Capacity, Leiture, and Opportunity: And I cannot but think, that many might command more of the latter, and perhaps improve their Capacities too, if they would take a due Care in the Government of themselves; if they would give up vain and unnecessary-Diversions, and certain Indulgences, which only suit and delight the lower Part of our Nature, and (to fay the best of them) deprive us of Pleasures much better than themselves, if they do not plunge us into Cuilt. Many of these Rules would appear easily practicable, if Men would learn to know the Value of Time, and particularly to redeem it from unnecessary Sleep, which wastes many golden Hours of the Day: Hours in which many of Gon's Servants are delighting themselves in Him, and drinking in full Draughts of the Water of Life; while these their Brethren are slumbering upon their Beds, and lost in vain Dreams, as far below the common Entertainments of a Rational Creature, as the Pleasures of the sublimest Devotion are above them.

§. 2. I know likewise, that the Mind is very fickle and inconstant; and that it is a hard Thing to preserve such a Government and Authority over our Thoughts, as would be very desireable, and as the Plan I have laid down will require. But so much of the Honour of God, and so much of our own true Happiness, depends upon it, that I beg you will give me a patient and attentive Hearing while I am pleading with you, and that you will seriously examine the Arguments, and then judge, whether a Care and Conduct like that which I have advised, be not in itself reasonable; and whether it will not be highly conducive to your Comfort and Usefulness in Life, your Peace in Death, and the Advancement and Increase of your Eternal Glory.

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Chap. 20. from our Obligations to GOD and Christ. 195 6. 3. LET Conscience say, whether such a Life, as I have described above, be not in itself highly Reasonable. Look over the Substance of it again, and bring it under a close Examination; for I am very apprehensive, that fome weak Objections may rife against the whole, which may in their Confequence 'affect Particulars, against which no reasonable Man would presume to make any Objection at all. Recollect, O Christian, and carry it with you'n your Memory and your Heart, while you are pursuing this Review, that you are the Creature of Gon, that you are purchased with the Blood of lusus; and then fay, Whether these Relations in which you fland, do not demand all that Application and Resolution which I would engage you to. Suppose all the Counsels I have given, reduced into Practice: Suppose every Day begun and concluded with fuch devout Breathings after Gon, and fuch holy Retirements for Morning and Evening Converse with Him and with your own Heart: Suppose a daily Care, in contriving how your Tima may be managed, and in reflecting how it has been employed: Suppose this regard to Gon, this Sense of his Prefence, and Zeal for his Glory, to run thro' your Acts of Wo. ship, your Hours of Business and Recreation; Suppose this Attention to Providence, this Guard against Temptations, this Dependance upon Divine Influence, this Government of the Thoughts in Solitude, and of the Discourses in Company: Nay, I will add farther, suppose every particular Direction given, to be pursued, excepting when particular Cases occur, with respect to which you shall be able in Conscience to say, " I wave it, not from Indolence and Careleffness, but " because I think it will be just now more pleasing to. " God to be doing something else; which may often happen in Haman Life, where general Rules are best concerted: Suppose, I say, all this to be done, not for a Day, or a Week, but thro' the Remainder of Life, whether longer or shorter; and suppose this to be reviewed at the Close of Life, in the full Exercise of your rational Faculties: Will there be Reason to say in the Reflection, "I have taken too much Pains in Religion: "The Author of my Being did not deserve all this " from me : Less Diligence, less Fidelity, less Zeal "than

It will conduce to your Comfort in Life. Chap. 20. " than this, might have been an Equivalent for the " Blood which was shed for my Redemption. A Part of " my Heart, a Part of my Time, a Part of my Labours, " might have sussiced for Him, who hath given me all " my Powers; for Him, who hath delivered me from that Defiruction, which would have made them my " everlasting Torment; for Him, who is raising me to " the Regions of a blifsful Immortality." Can you with any Face fay this? If you cannot, then furely your Confeience bears Witness, that all I have recommended. under the Limitations above, is reasonable; that Duty and Gratitude require it; and confequently, that by every allowed Failure in it, you bring Guilt upon your own Soul, you offend God, and act unworthy your Christian Profession.

§. 4. I INTREAT you farther to confider, Whether fuch a Conduct as I have now been recommending, would not con uce much to your Comfort and Usefulness in Life. Reflect seriously, What is true Happiness? Does it confift in Distance from Gon, or in Nearness to Him? Surely you cannot be a Christian, surely you cannot be a Rational Man, if you doubt, whether Communion with the great Father of our Spirits be a Pleasure and Felicity: And if it be, then furely they enjoy most of it, who keep him most constantly in View. You cannot but know in your own Conscience, that it is this which makes the Happiness of Heaven; and therefore the more of it any Man enjoys upon Earth, the more of Heaven comes down into his Soul. If you have made any Trial of Religion, tho' it be but a few Months or Weeks fince you first became acquainted with it, you wust be some Judge of it upon your own Experience, which have been the most pleasant Days of your Life. they not been those, in which you have acted most upon these Principles; those in which you have most steadily and resolutely carried them thro' every Hour of Time, and every Circumstance of Life? The Check which you must in many Instances give to your own Inclinations, might seem disagreeable; but it would surely be overbalanced in a most happy Manner, by the Satisfaction you would find in a Consciousness of Self-Government; in having such a Command of your Thoughts, Affections, and Actions, as is much more glorious than 6.5.1 any Authority over others can be.

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8. s. I would also intreat you to consider the Influence, which such a Gondust as this might have upon the Happiness of others. And it is easy to be seen, it must be very great; as you would find your Heart always difposed to watch every Opportunity of doing Good, and to seize it with Eagerness and Delight. It would engage you to make it the Study and Business of your Lite, to order Things in such a Manner, that the Endrof one kind and useful Action might be the Beginning of another; in which you would go on as naturally, as the inferior Animals do in those Productions and Actions by which Mankind are relieved or inriched; or as the Earth bears her successive Crops of different vegetable Supplies. And tho' Mankind be, in this corrupt State, fo unhappily inclined to imitate evil Examples rather than good; yet it may be expected, that while your Light thines before Men, some seeing your good Works will endeavour to transcribe them in their own Lives, and so to glorify your Father which is in Heaven (c). The Charm of fuch beautiful Models would furely impress some, and incline them at least to attempt an Imitation; and every Attempt would. dispose to another. And thus, thro' the Divine Goodnels, you might be entitled to a Share in the Praise, and the Reward, not only of the Good you had immediately done yourself, but likewise of that which you had engaged others to do. And no Eye, but that of an alllearching Gon, can fee, into what distant Times or Places the bleffed Confequences may reach. In every lastance of which these Consequences appear, it will put a generous and sublime Joy into your Heart, which no worldly Prosperity could afford, and which would be the liveliest Emblem of that high Delight which the Blessed Goo feels, in feeing and making his Creatures happy.

s. 6. It is true indeed, that amidst all those pious and benevolent Cares, Affictions may come, and in some Measure interrupt you in the Midst of your projected Schemes. But sure, these Affictions will sit much lighter, when your Heart is gladdened with the peaceful and joyful Resection of your own Mind, and with so honourable a Testimony of Conscience before God and Man. Delightful will it be, to go back to past Scenes in your

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That folemn and §. 7. AT length, Leath will come. important Hour, which hath been passed through by h many Thoulands who have in the main lived fuch a Life, and by fo many Millions who have neglected it. And let Conscience say, if there was ever any one of these Millions, who had then any Reason to rejoice in that Neglect; or any one, among the most first and exemplary Christian, who then lamented that his Heart and Life had been ice zealously devoted to God? Let Conscience say, whether they have wished to have a Part of that Time, which they have thus employed, given back to them again, that they might be more conformed to that World; that they might plunge themselves deeper into its Amusements, or pursue its Honours, its Possessions, or its Pleasures, with greater Eagerness than they had done? If you were yourfelf dying, and a dear Frienc or Child flood near you, and this Book and the last Chapter of it should chance to come into your Thoughts would you caution that Friend or Child against consuding himfelf by fuch Rules as I have advanced? In Question may perhaps feem unnecessary, where the An fwer is to plain and to certain. Well then, let me be feech you to learn bew you fall line, by reflecting bo you would die, and what Courfe you would wish to led back upon, when you are just quitting this World and entering upon another. Think fericusty; what Death should surprize you on a sudden, and you shoul be called into Eternity at an Hour's or a Minut Warning

Chap 20. make Death easy, and Eternity glorious. 193 Warning, would you not wish that your last Day should have been thus began; and the Course of it, if it were a Day of Health and Activity, should have been thus managed? Would not you wish that your Lord should find you engaged in fuch Thoughts and in fuch Purfuits? Would not the Paffage, the Flight from Earth to Heaven, be most easy, most pleasant, in this View and Connection? And on the other Hand, if Death should make more gradual Approaches, would not the Remembrance of fuch a pious, holy, humble, diligent and useful Life, make a dying Bed much fofter and eafier, than it would otherwise be? You would not die, depending upon these I hings: God forbid, that you should! Senfible of your many Imperfections you would, no doubt, defire to throw yourself at the Feet of Chrift, that you might appear before Goo, adorned with his Righteoufness, and washed from your Sins in his Blood. You would also with your dying Breath ascribe to the Riches of his Grace every Good Disposition you had found in your Heart, and every worthy Action you had been enabled to perform. But would it not give you a Delight worthy of being purchased with Ten Thousand Worlds to reflect, that his Grace bestowed upon you had not been in vain (d); but that you had from an humble Principle of grateful Love, glorified your Heavenly Father on Earth, and in some Degree, tho' not with the Perfection you could delire, finished the Work which he had given you to do (e): That you had been living for many patt Years as on the Borders of Heaven, and endeavouring to to form your Heart and Life to the Temper and Manners of its Inhabitants?

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§. 8. And once more, let me intreat you to reflect on the View you will have of this Matter, when you come into a World of Glory, if (which I hope will be the happy Case) Divine Mercy conduct you thither. Will not your Reception there be affected by your Care, or Negligence, in this Holy Course? Will it appear an indifferent Thing in the Eye of the Blessed Jesus, who distributes the Crowns, and allots the Thrones there, whether you have been among the most zealous, or the most indolent of his Servants? Surely you must wish, to have

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200 A Prayer fuited to the State of a Soul,, Chap. 20. an Entrance administered unto you abundantly, into the Kingdom of your Lord and Saviour (f): And what can more certainly conduce to it, than to be always abound. ing in this Work (g)? You cannot think so meanly of that glorious State, as to imagine, that you shall there look round about with a fecret Disappointment, and say in your Heart, that you over-valued the Inheritance you have received, and pursued it with too much Earnestness, You will not furely complain, that it had too many of your Thoughts and Cares: But on the contrary, you have the highest Reason to believe, that if any Thing were capable of exciting your Indignation and your Grief there, it would be, that amidst so many Motives, and fo many Advantages, you exerted yourfelf no more in the Profecution of such a Prize.

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§. 9. But I will not enlarge on so clear a Case, and therefore conclude the Chapter with reminding you, That to allow yourself deliberately to sit down satisfied with any impersect Attainments in Religion, and to look upon a more confirmed and improved State of it as what you do not desire, nay, as what you secretly resolve that you will not pursue, is one of the most satal Signs we can well imagine, that you are an entire Stranger to the first Principles of it.

A PRAYER fuited to the State of the Soul, who defires "
attain the Life recommended above.

RIESSED Gop, I cannot contradict the Force Of these Reasonings: Oh that I may feel more than ever the lafting Effects of them: I hou art the " great Fountain of Being, and of Happiness; and as " from Thee, my Being was derived, fo from Thee my " Happiness directly flows; and the nearer I am to 16 Thee, the purer and the more delicious is the Stream. With Thee is the Fountain of Light; in Thy Light may " I fee Light (h)! The great Object of my final Hope is to dwell for ever with Thee. Give me now fome " Foretalte of that Delight! Give me, I beseech Then to experience the Bleffedness of that Man who feared the Lord, and who delighter greatly in his Command ce mentii (h) Pfal. xxxvi.9 (g) 1 Cor. xv. 58. (f) 2 Pet. i. 11.

Chap. who wind attain to fuch a Course of Life. " ments (i); and so form my Heart by Thy Grace, that " I may be in the Fear of the Lord all the Day long (k)! " To Thee may my awakening Thoughts be directed; " and with the first Ray of Light that visits mine open-" ing Eyes, lift up, O Lord, the Light of Thy Counter-" nance upon me (1)! When my Faculties are roused " from that broken State in which they lay, while bu-

" ried, and as it were, annihilated in Sleep, may my " first Actions be consecrated to Thee, O God, who " givest me Light; who givest me, as it were, every

" Morning a new Life and a new Reason! Enable my " Heart to pour out itself before Thee, with a filial Reve-

" rence, Freedom and Endearment! And may I bearken " to GOD, as I defire that he should bearken unto me!

" May Thy Word be read with Attention and Pleasure! " May my Soul be delivered into the Mould of it, and " may I bide it in mine Heart, that I may not fin against

" Thee (m) ! Animated by the great Motives there sug-

" gested, may I every Morning be renewing the Dedica" tion of my/elf to Thee, thro Jesus Thy beloved Son;
" and be deriving from Him new Supplies of that Bles-

" fed Spirit of Thine, whose Influences are the Life of " my Soul!

" And being thus prepared, do Thou, Lord, lead me " forth by the Hand to all the Duties and Events of the " Day! In that Calling, wherein Thou hast been pleased " to call me, may I abide with Thee (n); not being " flotbful in Bufiness; but fervent in Spirit serving the " Lord (o) ! May I know the Value of Time, and al-" ways improve it to the best Advantage, in such Du-" ties as Thou hast assigned me; how low soever they " may feem, or how painful foever they may be! To "Thy Glory, O Lord, may the Labours of Life be purfued; and to Thy Glory may the Refreshments " of it be fought! Whither I eat, or drink, or whatever " 1 do (p), may that End fill be kept in View, and

" may it be attained! And may every Refreshment, " and Release from Buliness, prepare me to serve Thee

" with greater Vigour and Refolution!

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⁽i) Pfal. exii. r. (m) Hal cxix. 11.

⁽k) Prov. xxiii. 17:

⁽¹⁾ Pfal. iv. 6.

⁽P) 1 CH. K. 31.

^{(11) 1} Gor. VII. 20.

⁽o) Rom. xu. 11.

A Prayer suited to the State of a Soul, Chap. 20. " May mine Eye be watchful to observe the Descent " of Mercies from Thee; and may a grateful Sense of "Thine Hand in them add a Savour and a Relish to all! "And when Afflictions come, which in a World like this " I would accultom myfelf to expect, may I remember that they come from Thee; and may that fully reconas cile me to them, while I firmly believe, that the fame " Love which gives us our daily Bread, appoints us our daily Croffes; which I would learn to take up " that I may follow my dear Lord (q), with a Temper " like that which he manifested, when ascending Calvary for my Sake; faying like Him, the Cup which " my Father bath given me shall I not drink it (r)? " And when I enter into Temptation, do Thou, Lord, " d liver me from Evil (s)! Make me sensible, I intreat 15 Thee, of my own Weakness, that my Heart may be " raised to Thee for present Communications of pro-" pertionable Strength! When I am engaged in the Society of others, may it be my Defire and my Care, that "I may do, and receive, as much Good as possible; " and may I continually answer the great Purposes of " Life, by honouring Thee, and diffusing useful Know-" ledge and Happiness in the World! And when I am " alone, may I remember my Heavenly Father is with me; " and may I enjoy the Pleasure of Thy Presence, and feel " the animating Power of it, awakening my Soul to an " earnest Defire to think, and act, as in Thy Sight! "Thus let my Days be spent: And let them always be " closed in Thy Fear, and under a Sense of Thy graci-" ous Presence! Meet me, O Lord, in mine Evening " Retirements! May I chuse the most proper Time for " them; may I diligently attend to Reading and Prayer; " and when I review my Conduct, may I do it with " an impartial Eye! Let not Self love spread a false "Colouring over it; but may I judge myfelf, as one that " expects to be judged of the Lord, and is very folici-" tous he may be approved by Thee, who fearchest all " Hearts, and canst not forget any of my Works (t) ! Let " my Prayer come daily before Thee as Incense, and let the " lyting up of my Hands be as the Morning and the Bren-

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⁽q) Mark viii. 24. (r) John'xviii. 11. (s) Matt. vi. 13. (f) Amos viii. 7.

Chap. 20. who would attain to fuch a Courfe of Life. 203 " ing Sacrifice (u)! May I refign my Powers to Sleep " in sweet Calmness and Serenity; conscious that I " have lived to God in the Day, and chearfully per-" funded that I am accepted of Thee in Christ Jesus my " Lord, and humbly hoping in Thy Mercy thro' Him whe-" ther my Days on Earth be prolonged, or the Residue of them be cut off in the Midf (x)? If Death comes by " a leifurely Advance, may it find me thus employed; and if I am called on a fudden to exchange Worlds, " may my last Days and Hours be found to have been " conducted by fuch Maxims as these; that I may have " a sweet and easy Passage from the Services of Time " to the infinitely nobler Services of an immortal State! " I alk it thro' Him, who while on Earth was the fairest " Pattern and Example of every Virtue and Grace, and " who now lives and reigns with Thee, able to fave unto " the uttermost (y): To him having done all I would fly " with humble Acknowledgment that I am an unprofit-" able Servant (z); to Him be Glory for ever and " ever. Amen."

(u) Pfal. cxli. 2. (x) Ifai. xxxviii. 10. (y) Heb. vii. 25. (z) Lake xvii. 10.

CHAP. XXI.

A Caution against various Temptations, by which the young Convert may be drawn aside from the Course recommended above.

Dangers continue, after the first Difficulties (considered Chap. xvi.) are broken thro', §. 1. Particular Cautions, (1.) Against a sluggish and indolent Temper, §. 2. (2.) Against the excessive Love of sensitive Floasure, §. 3. leading to a Neglect of Business and needless Expence, §. 4. (3.) Against the Snares of vain Company, §. 5. (4.) Against excessive Hurries of worldly Business, §. 6. which is inferced by the fatal Consequences these have had in many Cases, §. 7. The Chapter concludes with an Exhortation to die to this World, and live to another, § 8. And the young Convert's Prayer for Divine Protection against the Dangers arising from these Snares:

S. r. HE Representation I have been making of the Pleasure and Advantage of a Life spent in Devotedness to God and Communion with Him, as I have described it above, will I hope engage you, my dear Reader, to form some Purposes, and make some Attempt to obtain it. But from considering the Nature, and observing the Course of Things, it appears exceedingly evident, that besides the general Opposition which I tormerly mentioned as like to attend you in your first Entrance on a religious Life, you will find even after you have resolutely broke thro' this, a Variety of Hindrances in any Attempts of exemplary Piety, and in the Prosecution of a remarkably strict and edifying Course, will present themselves daily in your Path. And whereas

Chap. 21. against a sturgish and indolent Temper. 205 you may by a few resolute Efforts, bassle some of the former sort of Enemies; these will be perpetually renewing their Onsets, and a vigorous Struggle must be continually maintained with them. Give me Leave now therefore, to be particular in my Caution against some of the chief of them. And here I would insist upon the Difficulties, which will arise from Indolence and the Love of Pleasure; from vain Company, and from worldly Cares. Each of these may prove insuring to any, and especially to young Persons, to whom I would now have some

particular Regard.

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§. 2. I INTREAT you therefore, in the first Place, that you will guard against a fluggist and indolent Temper. The love of Ease infinuates itself into the Heart, under a Variety of plaufible Pretences, which are often allowed to pals, when Temptations of a groffer Nature would not be admitted. The mispending a little Time seems to wise and good Men but a small Matter; yet this sometimes runs them into great Inconveniencies. Itoften leads them to break in upon the Seasons regularly allotted to Devotion, and to defer Business, which might immediately be done, but being put off from Day to Day is not done at all; and thereby the Services of Life are at least diminished, and the Rewards of Eternity diminished proportionably: Not to infit upon it, that very frequently this lays the Soul open to farther Temptations, by which it falls in Consequence of being found unemployed. Be therefore fuspicious of the first Approaches of this Kind. Remember, that the Soul of Man is an active Being, and that it must find its Pleasure in Activity. Girdup therefore the Loins of your Mind (a). Endeavour to keep your - . felf always well employed. Be exact, if I may with humble Reverence use the Expression, in your Appointments with GOD. Meet Him early in the Morning; and lay not with the Sluggard, when the proper Hour of rifing is come, A little more Sleep, a little more Slumber (b). That Time which Prudence shall advise you, give to Conversation, and other Recreations. But when that is elapsed, and no unforeseen and important Engagement presents, rife and begone. Quit the Company of your dearest Friends, and retire to your proper Bufiness, whe-

Cautions against the Love of Pleasure, Chap. 21. ther it be in the Field, the Shop, or the Closet. For by acting contrary to the fecret Dictates of your Mind, as to what it is just at the present Moment best to do, tho' it be but in the Manner of spending Half an Hour, some Degree of Guilt is contracted, and a Habit is cherished, which may draw after it much worse Contequences. Consider therefore, what Duties are to be dispatched, and in what Seasons. Form your Plan as prudently as you can, and pursue it resolutely; unless any unexpec ted Incident arises, which leads you to conclude, that Duty calls you another Way. Allowances for fuch unthought of Interruption must be made; but if in Consequence of this, you are obliged to omit any Thing of Importance which you proposed to have done to Day, do it if possible To Morrow: And do not cut yourself out new Work, till the former Plan be dispatched; unless you really judge it, not merely more amusing, but more important. And always remember, that a Servant of Christ thould fee to it, that he determine on these Occasions, as in his Master's Presence.

6. 3. GUARD also against an excessive Love of Sensitive and animal Pleasure, as that which will be a great Hindrance to you in that Religious Course, which I have now been urging. You cannot but know that Christ has told us, that a Man must deny himself, and take up his Crofs daily, if be defire to become his Disciple (c). CHRIST the Son of God, the Former and the Heir of all Things, pleased not himself (d); but submitted to Want, to Difficulties and Hardships, in the Way of Duty, and fome of them of the extremelt Kind and Degree, for the Glory of God and the Salvation of Men. In this Way we are to follow Him; and as we know not how foon we may be called, even to refift unto Blood, firiting against Sin (e), it is certainly best to accustom ourselves to that D scipline, which we may possibly be called out to exercise, even in such rigorous Heights. A lost and delicate Life will give force to Temptations, which might eafily be subdied by one, who has habituated himself to endure Hardship as a good Soldier of Jesus Christ 1). It also produces an Attachment to this World, and an Unwil-

⁽c) Luke ix. 23.

⁽d) Rom. xv. 3.

⁽e) Heb. xii. 4.

⁽t) 2 Tim. ii. 3

Unwillingness to leave it; which ill becomes those who are Strangers and Pilgrims on Earth, and who expect to foon to be called away to that better Country which they profess to seek (g). Add to this, that what the World calls a Life of Pleasure, is necessarily a Life of Expence too, and may perhaps lead you, as it has done many others, and especially many who have been setting out in the World, beyond the Limits which Providence has affigued; and so after a short Course of Indusgence may produce a proportionable Want. And while in other Cafes it is true, that Pity Should be Sberon to the Poor, this is a Poverty, that is justly contemptible, because it is the Effect of a Man's own F lly; and when your Want thus comes upon you as an armed Man (h), you will not only find yourfelf thripped of the Capacity you might otherwise have fecured for performing those Works of Charity which are fo ornamental to a Christian Profession, but probably will be under strong Temptations to some low Artifice or mean Compliance, quite beneath the Christian Character, and that of an upright Man. Many who once made a high Profession, after a Se ies of fuch forry and scandalous Shirts, have fallen into the Infamy of Bank.upis, and of the worst Kind of Bankrupts; I mean such have lavished away on themselves what was indeed the Property of others, and so have injured, and perhaps ruined; the Indultrious, to teed a foolish, luxurious, or oftentatious Humour, which while indulged was the Shame of their own Families, and when it can be indulged no longer is their sorment. This will be a terrible Reproach to Religion: Such a Reproach to it, that a good Man would rather chuse to live on Bread and Water, or indeed to die for Want of them, than to occasion it.

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an vilS. 4. GWARD therefore, I befeech you against any Thing which might tend that Way, especially by Diligence in Business, and by Prudence and Frugality in Expence, which by the Divine Blessing, may have a very happy Influence to make your Affairs prosperous, your Health vigorous, and your Mind easy. But this cannot be attained without keeping a resolute Watch over yourself, and strenuously refusing to comply with many Proposals, which Indolence or Sensuality will offer in very plan-

(b) Prov. vi. 11.

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fible Forms and for which it will plead, "that it asks but very little." Take heed, lest in this Respect you imitate those fond Parents, who by indulging their Children in every little Thing they have a mind to, encourage them by insensible Degrees to grow still more increaching, and imperions in their Demands; as if they chose to be ruined with them, rather than to check them in what seems a Trisse. Remember, and consider that excellent Remark, sealed by the Ruin of so many Thousands: "He that despiseth small Things shall fall they little and little?"

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" by little and little." § 5. In this View, give me leave also seriously and tenderly to caution you, my dear Reader, against the Snares of vain Company. I speak not, as before, of that Company, which is openly licentious and profane. I hope, there is something now in your Temper and Views, which would engage you to turn away from fuch with Detellation and Horror. But'I befeech you to consider, that those Companions may be very dangerous, who might at first give you but very little Alarm: I mean thole, who tho' not the declared Enemies of Religion, and professed followers of Vice and Disorder, yet nevertheless have no practical Sense of Divine Things on their Hearts, so far as can be judged by their Converfation and Behaviour. You must often of Necessity be with fuch Persons, and Christianity uot only allows, but requires, that you should, on all expedient Occafions of Intercourse with them, treat them with Civility and Respect : But chuse not such for your most intimate Friends, and do not contrive to spend most of your leisure Moments among them. For fuch Converse has a sentible Tendency to alienate the Soul from God, and to render it unfit for all spiritual Communion with him. To convince you of this, do but reflect on your own Experience, when you have been for many Hours together among Persons of such a Character. Do you not find yourself more indisposed for Devotional Exercises? Do you not find your Heart, by insensible Degrees, more and more inclined to a Conformity to this World, and to look with a fecret Difrelish on those Objects and Employments, to which Reason directs as the noblest and the best? Observe the first Symptoms, and guard against the Snare in Time; And for this Purpose, endeavour to

Chap. 21. and the Harries of worldly Refinefs.

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form Friendships, founded in Piety, and supported by it. Be a Companion of them that fear God, and of them that keep his Precepts (i). You well know, that in the Sight of Gon they are the Excellent of the Earth; let them therefore be all your Delight (k). And that the peculiar Benefit of their Friendship may not be lost, endeavour to make the best of the Hours you spend with them. The wifett of Men has observed, that when Counsel in the Heart of a Man is like deep Waters; that is, when it lies low and concealed, a Man of Understanding will draw it out (1). Endeavour therefore on fuch Occasions, so far as you can do it with Decency, and Convenience, to give the Conversation a Religious Turn. And when serious and useful Subjects are flarted in your Presence, lay hold of them, and cultivate them; and for that Purpose let the Word of Christ dwell richly in you (m), and be continually made the Man of your Counsel (n).

§. 6. Ir it be so, it will secure you, not only from the. Snares of Idleness and Luxury, but from the Contagion of every bad Example. And it will also engage you to guard against those excessive Hurries of worldly Bufiness, which would fill up all your Time and Thoughts, and thereby choke the good Word of God, and render it in a great Measure, if not quite, unfruitful (o). Young yeople are generally of an enterprizing Disposition : Having experienced comparatively little of the Fatigue of Bufiness, and of the Disappointments and Incumbrances of Life, they eafily swallow them up, and annihilate them in their Imagination, and fancy that their Spirit, their Application and Address, will be able to encounter and furmount every Obstacle of Hindrance. But the Event proves it otherwise. Let me intreat you therefore, to be cautious, how you plunge yourself into a greater Variety of Buliness than you are capable of managing as you ought, that is, in Considency with the Care of your Souls, and the Service of Goo; which certainly ought not on any Presence to be neglected. It is true indeed, that a prudent Regard. to your Worldly Interest would require fuch a Caution; as it is obvious to every careful Observer, that Multitudes are undone, by grasping at more than they can conveniently manage. Hence it has frequently been feen, that while

⁽i) Pfal. exix: 63. (k) Pfal. xvi. 3. (m) Col. ni. 10. (n) Pfal. exix. 24'

⁽¹⁾ Prov. xx · 5 (0) Matt. xiii. 22.

while they have seemed resolved to be rich, they have pierced themselves thro' with many Sorrows (p), have ruined their own Families, and drawn down many others into Defolation with them. Whereas, could they have been contented with moderate Employments and moderate Gains, they might have prospered in their Business, and might by fure Degrees, under a Divine Bieffing have advanced to great and honourable Increase. But if there were no Danger at all to be apprehended on this Head, if you, were as certain of becoming rich and great, as you are of perplexing and fatiguing yourfelf in the Attempt, confider I beseech you, how precarious these Enjoyments are. Confider, how often, a plentiful Table becomes a Snare, and that which should have been for a Man's Welfure becomes a Trap (q). Forget not that short Lesson, which is so comprehensive of the highest Wisdom; One Thing is needful (r). Be daily thinking, while the gay and the great Things of Life are glittering before your Eyes, how foon Death will come, and impoverish you at once; how foon it will strip you of all Possessions, but those which a naked Soul can carry along with it into Eternity, when it drops the Body in the Grave. ETERNITY! ETERNITY! ETERNITY! Carry the View of it about with you, if it be possible, thro' every Hour of waking Life; and be fully perfuaded, that you have no Business, no Interest in Life, that is inconfiltent with it: For whatsoever would be injurious to this View, is not your Bufiness, is not your Interest. You see indeed, that the Generality of Men act as if they thought the great Thing which God required of them, in order to fecure his Favour, was to get as much of the World as possible; at least, as much as they can without any grofs Immorality, and without rifquing the Loss of all, for making a little Addition. And as if it were to abet this Defign, they tell others, and perhaps tell themselves, they only feek Opportunities of greater Usefulness. But in Effect, if they mean any Thing more by this, than a Capacity of Ufefulneis, which when they have it, they will not exert, they generally deceive themselves; and one Way or another, it is a vain Pretence. In most Instances, Men seek the World,

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⁽p) 1 Tim. vi. 10.

⁽q) Pfal. lxix. 22.

⁽r) Luke x. 42

World, -either that they may hoard up Riches, for the mean and scandalous Satisfaction of looking upon them while they are living, and of thinking, that when they are dead it will be faid of them, that they have left fo many Hundreds or Thousands of Pounds behind them; very probably, to infnare their Children, or their Heirs, (for the Vanity is not peculiar to those who have Children of their own:) --- Or elfe, that they may lavish away their Riches on their Lusts, and drown themselves in a Gulph of Sensuality, in which, if Reason be not loft, Religion is soon swallowed up, and with it all the noblest Pleasures which can enter into the Heart of Man. In this View, the Generality of Kich People appear to me Objects of much greater Compassion than the Poor: Especially as when both live (which is frequently the Cate without any Fear of GOD before their Eyes, the Rich abuse the greater Variety and Abundance of his Favours, and therefore will probably feel, in that World of future Roin which awaits im enitent Sinners, a more exquisite Sense of their Misery.

§. 7. And let me observe to you, my dear Reader, lett you should think yourfelf secure from any such Danger, that we have great Reason to apprenend, there are many now in a very wretched State, who once thought feriously of Religion, when they were first setting out, in lower Circumitances of Life; but they have fince forfaken God for Mammon, and are now priding themleives, in those golden Chains, which in all Probability, before it be long, will leave them to remain in those of Darkness. When therefore an Attachment to the World may be followed with fuch fatai Consequences, let not thine Heart. envy Sinners (s); and do not, out of a Defire of gaining what they have, be guilty of tuch Foliy as to expole yourself to this double Danger of failing in the Attempt, or of being undone by the Success of it. Contract your Defires; endeavour to be eafy and content with a little: And if Providence call you out to act in a larger Sphere, submit to it in Obedience to Providence, but number it among the Trials of Life, which it will require a larger Proportion of Grace to bear well. For be affared, that as Affairs and Interests multiply, Cares and Duties

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Duries will certainly increase, and probably Disappointments and Sorrows will increase in an equal Proportion.

6. 8. On the whole, Learn by Divine Grace to die to the prejent World; to look upon it as a low State of Being, which God never intended for the final and compleat Happiness, or the supreme Care of any one of his Children: A World, where fomething is indeed to be enjoyed, but chiefly from Himfelf; where a great deal is to be borne with Parience and Refignation; and where fome important Duties are to be performed, and a Courfe ef Discipline to be passed thro', by which you are to be formed for a better State; to which as a Christian you are near, and to which God will call you, perhaps on a sudden, but undoubtedly, if you hold on your Way, in the fittest Time and the most convenient Manner. Refer therefore all this to Him. Let your Hopes and Fears, your Expectations and Defires, with Regard to this World be kept as low as possible; and all your Thoughts be united, as much as may be, in this one Center, What it is, that God would, in present Circumstances, have you to be; and what is that Method of Conduct, by which you may most effectually please and glorify him!

The Young Convert's PRAYER for Divine Protection against the Danger of these Snares.

BLESSED GOD! In the Midst of Ten Thou"fand Snares and Dangers, which surround me
"from without and from within, permit me to look up

" unto Thee with my humble Intreaty, that Thou

wouldst deliver me from them that rife up against me (t),

and that Thine Eyes may be upon me for Good (u)!
When Sloth and Indolence are ready to feize me,

" awaken me from that Idle Dream, with lively and

affectionate Views of that invisible and eternal World, to which I am tending! Remind me of what infinite

" Importance it is, that I diligently improve those

" transient Moments, which Thou hast allotted to me

" as the Time of my Preparation for it!

"When Sinners entice me, may I not consent (x)?"
"May holy Converse with God give me a Disrelish for the

(t) Pfal. lix. 1, (u) Jer. xxiv. 6. (x) Prov. i. 101

Chap. 21. A Prayer to be kept from thefe Snares. " the Converse of those who are Strangers to Thee, " and who would separate my Soul from Thee! May I " bonour them that fear the Lord (y), and walking with " fuch wife and holy Men, may I find I am daily ad-" vancing in Wildom and Holiness (z) ! Quicken me, O " Lord, by their Means; that by me Thou mayest also " quicken others! Make me the happy Instrument of " inkindling and animating the Flame of Divine Love " in their Breasts; and may it catch from Heart to " Heart, and grow every Moment in its Progress. " Guard me, O Lord, from the Love of fensual Plea. " fure! May I seriously remember, that to be carnally-" min led is Death (a)! May it please Thee therefore, " to purity and refine my Soul by the Influence of Thine " Holy Spirit, that I may always shun unlawful Grati-" fications, more folicitously than others pursue them; " and that those Indulgences of animal Nature, which "Thou hast allowed, and which the Constitution of "Things render necessary, may be soberly and mode-" rately used ! May I still remember the superior Dig-" nity of my Spiritual and Intelligent Nature, and may " the Pleasures of the Man and the Christian be sought " as my noblest Happiness! May my Soul rife on the " Wings of holy Contemplation, to the Regions of In-" visible Glory; and may I be endeavouring to form " myself, under the Influences of Divine Grace, for the " Entertainments of those Angelick Spirits, that live in "Thy Presence in a happy Incapacity of those gross De-" lights, by which Spirits dwelling in Flesh are so often " infnared, and in which they so often lose the Memory " of their high Original, and of those noble Hopes " which alone are proportionable to it! " Give me, O Lord, to know the Station in which "Thou hall fixed me, and fleadily to pursue the Du-" ties of it! But deliver me from those excessive Cares of " this World, which would fo engross my Time and my " Thoughts, that the one Thing needful should be for-" gotten! May my Defires after wirldly Possessions be " moderated, by confidering their uncertain and unfatif-" tying Nature; and while others are laying up Treasures " on

(z) Prov. X.11. 29.

() Rom. viii. 6

(y) Pial. xv. 4.

A Prayer to be kept from these Snares. Chap. 21; on Earth, may I be rich towards GOD (b)! May I never be too busy to attend to those great Assars, which lie between Thee and my Soul; never be so engrossed with the concerns of Time, as to neglect the Interests of Eternity! May I pass thro' Earth with my Heart and Hopes set upon Heaven, and seel the attractive Insluence stronger and stronger, as I approach still nearer and nearer to that desirable Center; till the happy Moment come, when every earthly Object shall disappear from my View, and the shining Glories of the Heavenly World shall fill my improved and strengthened Sight, which shall then be cheared with that which would now overwhelm me! Amen."

(b) Lnke xii. 21.

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CHAP. XXII.

The Case of Spiritual Decay and Languor in Religion.

Declenfions in Religion, and Relapses into Sins, with their forrowful Consequences, are in the general too probable, §. 1. The Caje of Declension and Lauguor in Religion described, negatively; §. 2. and postively; § 3. as discovering itself, (1.) By a Failure in the Duties of the Closet § 4. (2.) By a Neglect of Social Worship, §. 5. (3.) By Want of Love to our Fellow-Christians, §, 6. (4.) By an undue Attachment to Sen-Jual Pleasures, or secular Cares, & 7. (5.) By Prejudices against fome important Principles in Religion: §. 8. A Symptom peculiarly sad and dangerous, §. 9, 10. Directions for Recovery, §. 11. Immediately to be pursued, §. 12. A Prayer for one under Spiritual Decays.

IF I am so happy as to prevail upon you in the LExhortations and Cautions I have given, you will probably go on with Pleasure and Comfort in Religion; and your Path will generally be like the Morning Light, which shineth more and more until the perfect Day. (a). Yet I dare not flatter myself with an Expectation of fuch Success, as shall carry you above those Varieties in Temper, Conduct, and State, which have been more or less the Complaint of the best of Men. Much do I fear, that how warmly foever your Heart may now be impressed with the Representation I have been making, tho' the great Objects of your Faith and Hope continue unchangeable, your Temper towards them will be changed. Much do I fear, that you will feel your Mind

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Mind languish and tire in the good Ways of God; nay, that you may be prevailed upon to take some Step out of them, and may thus fall a Prey to some of these Temptalions, which you now look upon with a holy Scorn. The probable Consequence of this will be, that God will bide his Face from you; that he will thretch forth his afflicting Hand against you; and that you still will see your forrowful Moments, how chearfully soever you may now be rejoicing in the Lord, and joying in the GOD of your Salvation (b). I hope therefore, it may be of some Service, if this too probable Event should happen, to consider these Cases a little more particularly: And I heartily pray, that God would make what I shall say concerning them, the Means of restoring, comforting, and strengthening your Soul, if he ever suffers you in

any Degree to deviate from him. §. 2. We will first consider the Case of Spiritual Deelenfions, and Languor in Religion. And here I defire, that, before I proceed any farther, you would observe, that I do not comprehend under this Head every Abatement of that Fervour, which a young Convert may find when he first becomes experimentally acquainted with Divine Things. Our Natures are fo framed, that the Novelty of Objects strikes them in something of a peculiar Manner : Not to urge, how much more easily our Passions are impressed in the earlier Years of Life, than when we are more advanced in the Journey of it. This, perhaps, is not sufficiently considered. Too great a Streft is commonly laid on the flow of Affections; and for Want of this a Christian who is ripened in Grace, and greatly advanced in his Preparation for Glory, may fometimes be ready to lament imaginary rather than real Decays, and to fay, without any just Foundation, Ob that it were with me as in Months past (c)! Therefore, you can hardly be too frequently told, that Religion conhas chiefly, "in the Resolution of the Will for GOD, " and in a constant Care to avoid whatever we are per-" suaded he would disapprove, to dispatch the Work " He has affigned us in Life, and to promote his Glory " in the Happiness of Mankind." To this we are chiefly to attend, looking in all to the Simplicity and

Chap. 22. by a failure in the Duties of the Closet. 217
Purity of those Motives from which we act, which we know are chiefly regarded by that GOD who fearebes the Heart; humbling themselves before him at the same Time under a Sense of our many Impersections, and flying to the Blood of Christ and the Grace of the Gospel.

6. 3. HAVING given this Precaution, I will now a little more particularly describe the Case, which I call the State of a Christian who is declining in Religion; to far as .. does not fall in with those, which I shall consider in the following Chapters. And I must observe, that it chiefly confiles "in a Forgetfulness of Divine Objects, " and a Remissness in those various Dutie, to which we " stand engaged by that folemn Surrender, which we have " made of ourselves to the Service of Goo." There will be a Variety of Symptoms, according to the different Circumstances and Relations in which the Chriftian is placed; but some will be of a more univertal Kind. It will-be peculiarly proper to touch on these; and so much the rather, as these Declensions are often unobserved, like the grey Hairs which were upon Ephraim when he knew it not (d).

State, it will probably first discover itself, by a Failure in the Duties of the Closet. Not that I suppose, they will at first, or certainly conclude, that they will at all, be wholly omitted: But they will be run over in a cold and formal Manner. Sloth, or some of those other Snares which I cautioned you against in the former Chapter, will so far prevail upon you, that the proper Season of Retinement is come, you will sometimes indulge yourself upon your Bed in the Morning, sometimes in Conversation or Business in the Evening, so as not to have convenient Time for it. Or perhaps, when you come into your Closet atthat Season, some favourite Book you are desirous to read, some Correspondence that you chuse to carry on, or some other Amusement will present itself, and plead

§ 4. Should you, my good Reader, fall into this

to be dispatched first. This will probably take up more Time than you imagined; and then secret Prayer will be hurried over, and perhaps reading the Scripture quite neglected. You will plead perhaps, that it is but for 218 There will be a Neglect of Social Duties, Chap. 22.
ouce: But the same Allowance will be made a fecond and a third Time; and it will grow more easy and familiar to you each Time, than it was the last. And thus GOD will be mecked, and your own Soul will be defrauded of its spiritual Meals, if I may be allowed the Expression; the Word of God will be slighted, and Self-Examination quite disused; and secret Prayer itself will grow a Burthen, rather than a Delight; a trissing Ceremony, rather than a devout Homage sit for the

Acceptance of our Father who is in Heaven.

§. 5. IF immediate and reso ute Measures be not taken for your Recovery from these Declensions, they will spread farther, and reach the Alls of social Worship. You will feel the Effect in your Families, and in Publick Ordinances. And if you do not fed it, the Symptoms will be so much the worse. Wandering Thoughts will (as it were) eat out the very Heart of these Duties. It is not, I believe, the Privilege of the most eminent Christians, to be entirely free from them: But probably in these Circumstances, you will find but few Intervals of first Attention, or of any Thing which wears the Appearance of inward Devotion. And when these heartless Duties are concluded, there will scarce be a Reflection made, how little God hath been enjoyed in them, how little he hath been honoured by them. Perhaps the Sacrament of the Lord's Support being fo admirably adapted to fix the Attention of the Soul, and to excite its warmest Exercise of holy Affections, may be the last Ordinance in which these Declensions will be felt. And yet, who can fay, that the Sacred Table is a privileged Place? Having been unnecessarily straitened in your Preparations, you will attend with less Fixedness and Enlargement of Heart than usual. And perhaps a Diffatisfaction in the Review, when there has been a remarkable Alienation or Infenfibility of Mind, may occasion a Disposition to forsake your Place and your Duty there. And when your Spiritual Enemies have once gained this Point upon you, it is probable you will fall by fwifter Degrees than ever, and your Resistance to their Attempts will grow weaker and weaker

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Chap. 22. and an undue Attachment to the World. 219

§ 6 When your Love to GOD our Father, and to the Lord Jesus Christ fails, your Fervour of Christian Assection to your Brethren in Christ will proportionably decline, and your Concern for Utefulness in Life abate; especially, where any Thing is to be done for Spiritual Edistration. You will find one Excuse or another, for the Neglect of Religious Discourse, perhaps not only among Neighbours and Christian Friends, when very convenient Opportunities offer; but even with Regard to those, who are Members of your own Families, and to those, who, if you are fixed in the superior Relations

of Lite, are committed to your Care.

6 7. WITH this Remissness, an Attachment, either to fenfual Pleasure, or to worldly Business, will increase. For the Soul must have something to employ it, and fomething to delight itself in : And as it turns to one or the other of these, Temptations of one Sort or another will present themselves. In some Instances, perhaps the firitest bounds of Temperance, and the regular Appointments of Life may be broken in upon thro' a Fondness for Company, and the Entertainments which often attend it. In other Instances, the Interests of Life appearing greater than they did before, and taking up more of the Mind, contrary Interests of other Persons may throw you into Disquietude, or plunge you in Debate and Contention, in which it is excremely difficult to preserve either the Serenity, or the Innocency of the Soul. And perhaps, if Ministers and other Christian Friends observe this, and endeavour in a plain and faithful Way to reduce you from your Wandering, a false Delicacy of Mind, often contracted in such a State as this, will render these Attempts extremely disagreeable. The Ulcer of the Soul (if I may be allowed the Expression,) will not bear being touched, when it most needs it; and one of the most generous and felf-denying Instances of Christian Friendsbip shall be turned into an Occasion of Coloness and Distaste, yea, perhaps, of Enmity.

§. 8. And possibly, to sum up all, this disordered State of Mind may lead you into some Prejudices against those very Principles, which might be most effectual for your Recovery: And your great Enemy may succeed so tar in his Attempts against you, as to persuade you, that

Prejudices will be formed in the Mind. Chap. 22. you have lost nothing in Religion, when you have al-He may very probably lead you to conmost lost all. clude, that your former Devotional Frames were mere Fits of Enthofiasm; and that the holy Regularity of your Walk before Gon, was an unnecessary Striceness and Scrupulofity. Nay, you may think it a great Improve. ment in Understanding, that you have learnt from some new Masters, that if a Man treat his Fellow-Creatures with Humanity and Good Nature, judging and reviling only those who would disturb others by the Narrowness of their Notions, (for these are generally exempted from other Objects of the most universal and difinterested Benevelence to often boofted of,) he must necessarily be in a very good State, tho' he pretend not to converse much with Gov, provided that he think respectfully of him, and do not provoke him by any gross Immoralities.

6. 9. I MENTION this in the last Stage of Religious Declenfions, because I apprehend that to be its proper Place; and I fear, it will be found by Experience to fland upon the very Confines of that gross Apostacy into deliberate and presumptuous Sin, which will claim our Confideration under the next Head: And because too, it is that Symptom, which most effectually tends to prevent the Success, and even the Use of any proper Remedies, in Confequence of a fond and fatal Apprehenfion, that they are needless. It is, if I may borrow the Simile, like those Fits of Lethargick Drowfiness, which

often precede Apoplexies and Death.

6. 10. It is by no means my Defign at this Time to reckon up, much less to consider at large those dangerous Principles, which are now ready to possess the Mind, and to lay the Foundation of a falfe and treacherous Peace. Indeed they are in different Inflances various, and sometimes run into opposite Extremes. But if God awaken you to read your Bible with Attention, and give you to teel the Spirit with which it is written, almost every Page will flash in Conviction upon the Mind, and spread a Light to scatter and disperse these Shades of Darkness.

6. 11. WHAT I chiefly intend in this Address, is to engage you, if possible, as soon as you perceive the first Symptoms of these Declensions, to be upon your Guard, and to endeavour as speedily as possible to recover your-

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self from them. And I would remind you, that the Remedy must begin, where the first Cause or Complaint prevailed, I mean, in the Closet. Take some Time for Recollection, and alk your own Conscience seriously, How Matters stand between the Blessed Gon, and your Soul? Whether they are as they once were, and as you could wish them to be, if you saw your Life just drawing to a Period, and were to pass immediately into the Eternal State? One serious Thought of Eternity shames a Thousand vain Excuses, with which in the Forgetfulness of it, we are ready to delude our own Souls. And when you feel that secret Misgiving of Heart, which will naturally arise on this O casion, do not endeavour to palliate the Matter, and to find out flight and artful Coverings, for what you cannot forbear fecretly condemning; but honestly fall under the Conviction, and be humbled for it. Pour out your Heart before God, and feek the renewed Influences of His Spirit and Grace. Return with more Exactness to secret Devotion, and to Self-Examination. Read the Scripture with yet greater Diligence, and especially the more Devotional and Spiritual Parts of it. Labour to ground it in your Heart, and to feel, what you have Reason to believe the Sacred Penmen selt when they wrote, fo far as Circumstances may agree. Open your Soul with all Simplicity, to every Lesson which the Word of Gon would teach you; and guard against those Things which you perceive to alienate your Mind from Inward Religion, tho' there be nothing criminal in the Things themselves. They may perhaps in the general be lawful; to some possibly they may be expedient; but if they produce such an Essect as was mentioned above, it is certain they are not convenient for you. In these Circumstances, above all seek the Converse of those Christians, whose Progress in Religion seems most remarkable, and who adorn their Profession in the most amiable Manner. Labour to obtain their Temper and Sentiments, and lay open your Case and your Heart to them, with all the Freedom which Prudence will permit. Employ yourself at Seascan of Leisure, in reading Practical and Devotional Books, in which the Mind and Heart of the pious Author is transfused into the Work.

Chap. 22, These Precautions to be presently taken. Work, and in which you can (as it were) tafte the ge. nuine Spirit of Christianity. And to conclude. Take the first Opportunity that presents, of making an Approach to the Table of the Lord, and spare neither Time, nor Pains, in the most serious Preparation for it. There renew your Covenant with Gop; put your Soul anew into the Hand of CHRIST, and endeavour to view the Wonders of his dying Love, in such a Manner as may rekindle the languishing Flame, and quicken you to more vigorous Resolutions than ever, to live unto Him who died for you (e). And watch over your own Heart, that the good Impressions you then feel, may continue. Rest not, till you have obtained as confirmed a State in Religion, as you ever knew. Rest not, vill you have made a greater Progress than before : For it is certain, more is yet behind; and it is only by a Zeal to go forwards, that you can be secure from the Danger of going backward, and revolung more and more.

§. 12. I ONLY add, that it is necessary to take these Precautions as foon as pessible; or you will probably find a much swifter Progress than you are aware in the downhill Road; and you may possibly be left of GOD, to fall into some gross and aggravated Sin, so as to fill your Conscience with an Agony and Horror, which the Pain

of broken Bones (f) can but imperfectly express.

A PRAYER for one under Spiritual Decays.

"TERNAL and Unchangeable JEHOVAH! Thy "Perfections and Glories are like Thy Being, immutable. Jesus Thy Son is the Jame Yesterday, To-Day, and for ever (g). The Eternal World to which I am hastening is always equally important, and presses upon the attentive Mind for a more fixed and solemn Regard, in Proportion to the Degree in which it comes nearer and nearer. But alas, my Views and my Assections, and my best Resolutions are continually varying, like this poor Body, which goes thro' daily and hourly Alterations in its State and Circumstances. Whence, O Lord, whence this sad Change which I now experience, in the Frame and Temper of my Mind towards Thee? Whence

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Chap. 22. A Prayer for one under Spiritual Decays. " this Alienation of my Soul from Thee? Why can I " not come to Thee with all the Endearments of filial "Love, as I once could? Why is thy Service fo re-" missly attended, if attended at all? And why are the " Exercises of it, which were once my greatest Pleasure, " become a Burthen to me? Where, O God, is the " Blessedness I once spake of (h), when my Joy in Thee " as my Heavenly Father, was fo conspicuous, that " Strangers might have observed it, and when my " Heart did so overflow with Love to Thee, and with " Zeal for Thy Service, that it was Matter of Self-Denial to me, to limit and restrain the genuine Ex-" pressions of those strong Emotions of my Soul, even " where Prudence and Duty required it? " Alas, Lord, whither am I fallen! Thine Eye sees " me still; but Oh how unlike what it once faw me! "Cold and insensible as I am, I must blush on the " Reflection .- Thou feest me in secret (i), and seest " me, perhaps, often amufing myself with Trifles, in " those Seasons, which I used solemnly to devote to "Thine immediate Service. Thou feeft me, coming

" into Thy Presence as by Constraint; and when I am " before Thee, fo straitened in my Spirit, that I hardly "know what to say to Thee, tho' thou art the God " with whom I have to do; and tho' the keeping up an " humble and dutiful Correspondence with Thee, is " beyond all Comparison the most important Business " of my Life. And even when I am speaking to Thee, " with how much Coldness and Formality is it? It is " perhaps the Work of the Imagination, the Labour " of the Lips: But where are those ardent Desires, "these intense Breathings after God, which I once " felt? Where is that pleafing Repose in Thee, which "I was once conscious of, as being near my Divine " Rest, as being happy in that Nearness, and resolving " that if possible I would no more be removed from it? "But Oh, how far am I now removed? When these " fhort Devotions, if they may be called Devotions, " are over, in what long Intervals do I forget thee, " and appear so little animated with thy Love, so little

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(h) Gal. iv. 15. (i) Matt: vi. 6.

"devoted to thy Service, that a Stranger might con-

A Prayer under Spiritual Decays. Chap. 22. 224 werse with me a confiderable Time, without knowing that I had ever formed any Acquaintance with Thee, " without discovering that I had so much as known or heard any Thing of God? Thou callest me to " Thine House, O Lord, on Thine own Day; but how " heartless are my Services there? I offer Thee no more than a Carcafe. My Thoughts and Affections are engroffed with other Objects, while I draw near Thu with my Mouth, and bonour Thee with my Lips (k) -Thou callest me to Thy Table; but my Least is fo frozen, that it hardly melts even at the Foot of the " Crots; hardly feels any Efficacy in the Blood of Jefus. .. Oh wretched Creature that I am ! Unworthy of being called Thine! Unworthy of a Place among Thy Children, or of the meanel Situation in Thy Fami-" ly; rather worthy to be cast out, to be forsaken, vea, to be utterly destroyed! " Is this, Lord, the Service which I once promised, and which Thou hast so many Thousand Reasons to " expect? Are these the Returns I am making, for hy daily providential Care, for the Sacrifice of thy Son, of for the Communications of Thy Spirit, for the Pa. don of my numberlets aggravated Sins, for the Hopes, " the undelerved, and to often forfeited Hopes, of Eternal Gory? Lord, I am ashamed to stand, or to kneel before Thee. But pity me, I befrech Thee, " and help me : For I am a pitiable Object inceed! " My Soul cleaveth unto the Duft, and lays itself as in the Dust before I hee; but Oh, quicken me, according to Thy Word (1)! Let me trifle no longer, for I am or upon the Brink of a Precipice! I am thinking of my Ways, Oh give me Grace to turn my Feet unto Thy 16 Testimonies; to make baste without any farther Delay, that I may keep thy Commanaments ()! Search mi " Oh Lord, and try me (n)! Go to the first Poot of this Dittemper, which spreads itself over my Soul; and recover me trom it ! Represent Sin unto me. O Lord "I beseech Thee, that I may see it with Abhorrence! " And represent the Lord Jesus Christ to me in such

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(k) Ifai. xxix. 13. (l) Pfal. cxix. 25. (p) Pfal. cxix. 59, 64 (n) Pfal. cxxxix. 23. (o) Zech. xii, 10.

" a Light, that I may look upon bim and mourn (o), that

" I may look upon him and love! May I awaken from " this stupid Lethargy, into which I am finking; and " may Chrift give me more abundant Degrees of Spi-" ritual Life- and Activity, than I have ever yet re-" ceived! And may I be so quickened and animated " by Iim, that I may more than recover the Ground " I have loft, and may make a more speedy and exem-" plary Progress, than in my best Days I have ever yet " done! Send down upon me, O Lord, in a more rich " and abundant Effusion, Thy good Spirit! May He " dwell in me, as in a Temple which He has confecrated " to Himfelf (p); and while all the Service is directed " and governed by Him, may boly and acceptable Sacri-" fices be continually offered (q)! May the Incense be " constant, and may it be fragrant! May the Sacred " Fire burn and blaze perpetually (r); and may none of " its Vessels ever be profaned, by being employed to " an unholy or forbidden Use! Amen.

(p) 1 Cor. iii. 16. (q) Rom. xii. 1. (r) Lev. vi. 13.

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CHAP XXIII.

The sad Case of a Relapse into known and deliberate Sin, after solemn Acts of Dedication to God, and some Progress made in Religion.

Unthought of Relatses may happen, §. 1. and bring the Soul into a miserable Case, §. 2. Yet the Case is not desperate, §. 3. The Backslider urged immediately to return: (1.) By deep Humiliation before GOD for so aggravated an Offence. §. 4. (2.) By renewed Regards to the Divine Mercy in Christ. §. 5. (3.) By an open Profession of Repentance, where the Crime hath given publick Offence. § 6. (4.) Falls to be reviewed for future Caution. §. 7 The Chapter concludes, §. 8. with a Prayer for the Use of one who hath fallen into gross Sins, after Religious Resolutions and Engagements.

1. THE Declenhons which I have described in the foregoing Chapter, must be acknowledged worthy of deep Lamentation: But happy will you be, my dear Reader, if you never know, by Experience, a Circumstance yet more melancholy than this. Perhaps, when you confider the View of Things which you now have, you imagine that no Confiderations can ever bribe you, in any fingle Instance, to act contrary to the prefent Dictates or Suggestions of your Conscience, and of the Spirit of God as fetting it on Work. No; You think, it would be better for you to die. And you think rightly, but Peter thought, and faid fo too: Tho' I should die with Thee, yet will I no: deny Thee (a): And yet, after all, be fell: And therefore be not bigh-minded, but fear (b). It is not impossible, but you may fall into that very Sin, of which you imagine you are lean in

(a) Matt xxvi 35.

(b) Rom. xi. 20.

Chap. 23. The Jad Diffress it will be attended with. 227 Danger, or into that against which you have most folemnly refolved, and of which you have already most bitterly repented. You may relapse into it again and again. But, Oh, if you do, nay, if you should deliberately and presumptuously fall but once, how deep will it pie ce your Heart? How dear will you pay for all the Pleasure, with which the Temptation has been baited? How will this separate between Gop and you? What a Defolation, what a dreadful Defolation, will it spread ever your Soul? It is grievous to think of it. Perhaps in fuch a State you may feel more Agony and Distress in your own Conscience, when you come seriously to reflect, than you ever felt when you were first awakened and reclaimed; because the Sin will be attended with some very high Aggravations, beyond those of your unregenerate State. I well know the Person, that said, "The Agonies of a Sinner in the first Pangs of his Re-" pentance were not to be mentioned on the same Day, " with those of the Backst der in Heart, when he comes " to be filled with his own Way (c)."

6. 2. INDEED it is enough to wound one's Heart to think, now yours will be wounded: How all your Comforts, all your Evidences, all your Hopes will be clouded: What thick Darkness will spread itself on every Side, so that neither Sun, nor Moon, nor Stars, will appear in your Heaven. Your Spiritual Confolations will be gone; and your Temporal Enjoyments will also be rendered tasteless and infipid. And if Afflictions be fent, as they probably may, in order to reclaim you, a Consciousness of Guilt will sharpen and invenom the Then will the Enemy of your Soul with all his An and Power rife up against you, encouraged by your Fall, and labouring to trample you down in utter hopeless Ruin. He will persuade you, that you are a leady undone beyond Recovery. He will suggest, that it fignifies nothing to attempt it any more; for that every Effort, every Amendment, every Act of Repentance, will but make your Case so much the worse,

and plunge you lower and lower into Hell.

from tha fure Remedy, which yet remains. But yield

The Backslider in fuch a Case is urged, Chap. 21. not to him. Your Case will indeed be sad; and if it be now your Case, it is deplorably so; and to rest in it would be still much worse. Your Heart would be bard. ened yet more and more; and nothing could be expected, but sudden and aggravated Destruction. Yet blessed be God, it is not quite hopelefs. Your Wounds are corrupted because of your Foolishness (d); but the Gangrene is not incurable. There is a Balm in Gilead, there is a Physician there (e). Do not therefore render your Condition indeed bopelefs, by now faying, There is no Hope (f), and drawing a fatal Argument from that falle Supposition for going after the Iaols you have loved. Let me address you, in the Language of God to his Backstiding People, when they were ready to apprehend that to be their Case, and to draw such a Conclusion from it: Oaly return unto me faith the Lord (g). Cry for renewed Grace; and in the Strength of it labour to return. Cry with David under the like Guilt, for I bave gone astray like a lost Sheep, seek thy Servant; for I do not for. get thy Commandments (h); and that Remembrance of them is, I hope, a Token for Good. But if thou wilt return at all, do it immediately. Take not one Step more in that fatal Path, to which thou hast turned ande. Think not to add one Sin more to the Account, and then to repent; as if it would be but the same Thing on the whole. The second Error may be worse than the first; it may make way for another and another, and draw on a terrible Train of Consequences, beyond all you can now imagine. Make bafe therefore, and do not delay. Escape, and fly, as for thy life (i), before the Dart firike thro' thy Liver (k). Give not Sleep to think Eyes, nor Slumber to thine Eye lids (1): Lie not down upon this Bed under unpardoned Guilt, lest Evil overtake thee, left the Sword of Divine Justice should smite thee; and whilst thou pu posest to return To morrow, then shouldst this Night go and take Possession of Hell.

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§ 4. RETURN immediately; and permit me to add, return folemnly. Some very pious and excellent Divines have expressed themselves upon this Head, in a Manner which

(k) Prov. vii. 23. (1) Prov. vi. 4.

⁽d) Pfal. xxxviii. 5. (c) Jer. viii. 22. (f) Jer. 11. 25. (g) Jer. iii. 13. (h) Pfal. cxix. 176. (i) Gen. xix. 17

which feems liable to dangerous Abuse; when they urge Men after a Fall, " not to ftay to furvey the Ground, " nor consider how they came to be thrown down, but " immediately to get up and renew the Race." In flighter Cases the Advice is good: But when Conscience has suffered such violent Outrage by the Commission of known, wilful and deliberate Sin, (a Case which one would hope, should but seldom happen to those who have once fincerely entered on a Religious Course,) I can by no means think, that either Reason or Scripture encourage such a Method. Especially would it be improper, if the Action itself has been of so heinous a Nature, that even to have fallen into it on the most sudden Surprize of Temptation must have greatly ashamed, and terrified, and distressed the Soul. Such an Affair is dreadfully folemn, and should be treated accordingly. If this has been the fad Case with you, my then unhappy Reader, I would pity you, and mourn over you; and would befeech you, as you tender your Peace, your Recovery, the Health, and the very Life of your Soul, that you would not loiter away an Hour. Retire immediately for serious Reflection. Break thro! other Engagements and Employments, unless they be fuch as you cannot in Conscience delay for a few Hours, which can feldom happen in the Circumstance I now suppose. This is the one Thing needful. Set yourself to it therefore, as in the Presence of Goo, and hear at large patiently and humbly what Confcience has to fay, tho' it chide and reproach severely. Yea, earnestly pray, that God would speak to you by Conscience, and make you more thoroughly to know and feel, what an evil and bitter Thing it is, that you have thus for faken bim (m). Think of all the aggravating Circumstances attending your Offence; and especially think of those, which arise from abused Mercy and Goodness; which arise, not only from your solemn Vows and Engagements to Gon, but from the Views you have had of a Redeemer's Love, sealed even in Blood. And are these the Returns? Was it not enough that CHRIST should have been thus injured by his Enemies? Must be be wounded in the House of bis Friends too (n)? Were you delivered to work such Abomina-

(n) Zech. xiii. 6.

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Ab minations as these (0)? Did the blessed Jesus groan and die for you, that you might sin with Boldness and Freedom, that you might extract, as it were, the very Sirit and Esses of Sin, and offend God to a Height of Ingravitude and Baseness, which would otherwise have term in the Nature of Things impossible? Oh think, how justly God might cast you out from his Presence! How justly He might number you among the most signal Instances of his Vengeance! And think, how your Heart would endare, or your Hands be strong, if he should de it thus with you (p)! Alas, all your former Experiences would enhance your Sense of the Ruin and Misery! that must be felt in an Eternal Banishment from the Divine Presence and Favour.

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§. 5. INDULGE fuch Reflections as these. Stand the humbling Sight of your bins in fuch a View as this. The more odious and the more painful it appears, the greater Prospect there will be of your Benefit by attending to it. But the Matter is not to rest here. All these Reflections are intended, not to grieve, but to cure; and to grieve no more than may promote the Cure. You are indeed to look upon Sin; but you are also, in such a Circumstance, if ever, to look upon Christ; to look upon bim, whom you have now pierced deeper than before, and to mourn for him with Sincerity and Tenderuels (q). The God whom you have injured and affronted, whose Laws you have broken, and whose Justice you have (as it were) challenged by this foolish wretched Apostacy, is nevertheless a most merciful GOD (r). You cannot be so ready to return to him, as he is to receive you. Even now does he, as it were, folicit a Reconciliation, by those tender Impressions which he is making upon your Heart. But remember, bow he will be reconciled. I is in the very same Way, in which you made your first Approach to him; in the Name and for the Sake, of his dear Son. Come therefore, in an humble Dependance upon him. Renew your Application to JESUS, that his Blood may (as it were) be sprinkled upon your Soul, that your Soul may thereby be purified, and your Gult removed. This very Sin of yours, which the Bieffed Gon foresaw, increased the Weight of your Redeemer's

⁽c) Jer. vii. 10. (r) Ezek, xx¹., 14. (q) Zech. xii. 10. (r) Deut. iv. 31.

Chap. 23. Diwine Mercy to be fought thro' Him. deemer's Sufferings: It was concerned in shedding his Blood. Humbly go, and prostrate yourself before him, lamenting your wretched thate, and befeeching him to have pity upon you. That compassionate Saviour will delight to restore you, when you lie as an humble Suppliant at his Feet, and will graciously take Part with you in that Peace and Pleafure which he gives. Through Him renew your Covenant with Goo, that broken Covenant, the Breach of which Divine Juffice might teach you to know by terrible Things in Righteousness (s): But Mercy allows of an Accomodation. Let the Consciousness and Remembrance of that Breach engage you to enter into Covenant anew, under a deeper Sense than ever of your own Weakness, and a more cordial Dependance on Divine Grace for your Security, than you have ever yet entertained. I know, you will be ashamed to present yourself among the Children of God in his Sanctuary, and especially at his Table, under a Consciouinels of fo much Guilt : But break thro' that Shame, it Providence open you the Way. You would be bumbled before your offended Father: But furely there is no Place where you are more like to be humbled, than when you fee yourself in his House, and no Ordinance administered there can lay you lower than that in which Christ is evidently set forth as crucified before your Eyes (t). Sinners are the only Persons who have Business there. The best of Men come to that Sacred Table, as Sinners. As such make your Approach to it; yea, as the greatest of Sinners; as one who needs the Blood of Jesus, as much as any Creature upon Earth.

§. 6. And let me remind you of one Thing more. If your Fall has been of such a Nature as to give any Scandal to others, be not at all concerned to save Appearances, and to moderate those Mort sications which deep Humiliation before them would occasion. The Depth and Pain of that Mortification is indeed an excellent Medicine, which God has in his wise Goodness appointed for you in such Circumstances as these. In such a Case, consess your Fault with the greatest Frankness: Aggravate it to the utmost: Intreat Pardon, and Prayer, from those whom you have offended. Then, and never till then, will you be in the Way to Peace: Not by palli-

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Repentance to be publick, if the Sin be fo, Chap. 23. ating a Fault, not by making vain Excuses, not by objecting to the Manner in which others may have treated you; as if the least Excess of Rigour in a faithful Admonition were a Crime equal to some great Immorality that occasioned it. This can only proceed from the Madness of Pride and Self-Love: It is the Sensibility of a Wound, which is hardened, swelled, and inflamed; and it must be reduced, and cooled and suppled, before it can possibly be cured. To be censured, and condemned by Men, will be but a little Grievance, to a Soul theroughly humbled and broken under a Sense of having incurred the condemning Sentence of Gon. Such a one will rather defire to glorify GOD, by submitting to deferve Blame; and will fear deceiving others into a more favourable Opinion of him, than he inwardly knows himself to deserve. These are the Sentiments which God gives to the fincere Penitent in fuch a Case; and by this Means he restores him to that Credit and Regard among others, which he does not know how to feek, but which nevertheless, for the Sake both of his Comfort and Usefulness, Gop wills that he should have; and which it is, humanly speaking, impossible for him to recover any other Way. But there is fomething to honourable in the frank Acknowledgment of a Fault, and in deep Humiliation for it, that all who fee it, must needs approve it. They pity an Offender, who is brought to fuch a Disposition; and endeavour to c mfort him with returning Expressions, not only of their Love, but of their Esteem too.

g. 7. Excuse this Digression, which may suit some Cases; and which would suit many more, if a regular Discipline were to be exercised in Churches: For on such a Supposition, the Lord's Supper could not be approached after visible and scandalous Falls, without solemn Confession of the Offence, and Declarations of Repentance. On the other Hand, there may be Instances of sad Apostacy, where the Crime, tho' highly aggravated before God, may not fall under Human Notice. In this Case, remember, that your Business is with Him, to whose piercing Eye every Thing appears in its just Light: Before Him therefore prostrate your Soul, and scek a solemn Reconciliation with Him, consirmed by the Memorials of his dying Son. And when this is

Chap 23. Falls to be reviewed for future Caution. 233done, imagine not, that because you have received the Tokens of Pardon, the Guilt of your Apostacy is to be forgot at once. Bear it still in your Memory for suture Caution: Lament it before Gon, in the frequent Returns of secret Devotion especially: And view with Humiliation the Scars of those Wounds which your own Folly occasioned, even when by Divine Grace they are thoroughly healed. For God establishes his Covenant, not to remove the Sense of every past Abomination, but that thou majest remember thy Ways, and be confounded, and never open thy Mouth any more because of the Shame, even when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord (u).

§. 8. And now, upon the whole, if you desire to attain such a Temper, and to return by such Steps as these, then immediately fall down before God, and pour out your Heart in his Presence, in Language like this.

APRAYER for one who has fallen into gross Sin, after Religious Resolutions and Engagements.

MOST Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord Gon! When "I feriously reflect on Thy spotless Purity, and " on the frict and impartial Methods of Thy steady " Administration, together with that Almighty Power " of Thine, which is able to carry every Thought of "Thine Heart into immediate and full Execution, I " may justly appear before Thee this Day with Shame " and Terror, in Confusion and Consternation of Spirit. " This Day, O my Goo, this dark mournful Day, would I take Occasion to look back to that fad " Source of our Guilt, and our Mifery, the Apollacy of " our common Parents, and fay with thine offending " Servant David, Behold, I was shapen in Iniquity, and in " Sin did my Mother conceive me (w). This Day would " I lament all the fatal Confequences of fuch a Descent, " with Regard to myfelf. And, Oh how many have " they been ! - The Remembrance of the Sins of my " unconverted State, and the Failings and Infirmities " of my after Life, may justly confound me! How much " more such à Scene, as now lies before my Conscience, " and before Thine all feeing Eye ? For Thou, O Lord, " knowest my Footishness, and my Sins are not bid from

A Prayer for one fallen into gross Sin, Chap. 21. " Thee (x). Thou tellest all my Wanderings from Thy " Statutes (y): Thou feeft, and Thou recordeft, every " Instance of my Disobedience to Thee, and of my Re-" bellion against Thee: Thou feest in every aggra-" vated Circumstance which I can discern, and in many " more which I have never observed or reflected upon. " How then shall I appear in The Presence, or lift up my " Face to Thee (z)! I am full of Confusion (a), and feel " a fecret Regret in the Thought of applying to Thee: " But, O Lord, to whom should I go, but unto Thee (b) ? "Unto Thee, on whom depends my Life or my Death; " usto Thee, who alone can't take away the Burden of "Guilt, which now presses me down to the Dust; who alone canst restore to my Soul that Rest and Peace which " I have loft, and which I deserve for ever to lose? " Behold me, O Lord Goo, falling down at Thy " Feet! Behold me pleading guilty in Thy Presence, and furrendering myself to that Justice which I cannot " escape! I have not one Word to offer in my own Vin-" dication, in my own Excuse. Words, far from being able to clear up my Innocence, can never sufficiently describe the Enormity and Demerit of my Sin. Thou of O Lord, and Thou only knowest to the full, how " heinous and aggravated it is. Thine Infinite Un-" derstanding alone, can fathom the Infinite Depth of its " Malignity. I am, on many Accounts, most unable to " do it. I cannot conceive the Glory of Thy Sacred Maet jesty, whole Au hority I have despised, nor the Number and Variety of those Mercies, which I have sinned " against. I cannot conceive the Value of the Blood or Thy dear Son, which I have ungratefully trampled " under my Feet; nor the Dignity of that Bleffed Spirit of Thine, whose Agency I have, as far as I could, 66 been endeavouring to oppose, and whose Work I " have been, as with all my Might, labouring to undo, " and to tear up (as it were) that Plantation of His 66 Grace, which I should rather have been willing to have se guarded with my Life, and watered with my Blood. " Oh the Baseness and Madness of my Conduct! That I " should thus, as it were, rend open the Wounds of my " Soul, of which I had died long ere this, had not Thine

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⁽x) Ffal. lxix. 5.
(a) Job x. 15.

⁽y) Pfal. lvi. 8.

⁽z) Ezra ix. 6.

Chap. 23. after former religious Engagements.

" own Hand applied a Remedy, had not Thine only Son " bied to prepare it! That I should violate the Cove-" nant I have made with Thee by Sacrifice (c), by the " Memorials of fuch a Sacrifice too, even of Jesus, my " Lord, whereby I am become guilty of his Body and " B'ood (d) ! That I should bring such dishonour upon " Religion t., by fo unsuitable a Walk, and perhaps " open the Mouths of its greatest Enemies to insult it " upon my Account, and prejudice some against it to

" their everlasting Destruction !

"I wonder, O Lord Gob, that I am here to own all this. I wonder, that Thou hast not long ago appeared as a swift Witness against me (e); that I hou hast " not discharged the Thunderbolts of Thy slaming "Wrath against me, and crushed me into Hell; mak-" ing me there a Terror to all about me, as well as to my. " felf, by a Vengeance and Ruin, to be diftinguished " even there, where all are miterable, and all hopeless. " O God, Thy Patience is Marvellous! But how much " more marvellous is Thy Grace, which after all this, in-" vites me to Thee! While I am here giving Judgment " against myself, that I deserve to die, to die for ever, "Thou art sending me the Words of Everlasting Life, " and calling me, as a backfliding Child, to return unto " Thee (f). Behold, therefore, O Lord, invited by Thy " Word, and encouraged by Thy Grace, I come; and " great as my Transgressions are, I humbly beseech Thee, " freely to pardon them: Because I know, that tho' my " Sins have reached unto Heaven (g), and are lifted up " even unto the Skies (h), Thy Mercy, O Lord, is above. " the Heavens (i). Excend that Mercy to me, O Hea-" venly Father; and display, in this illustrious Instance, " the Riches of Thy Grace, and the Prevalency of Thy " Son's Blood! For furely, if fuch crimfon Sins as mine, " may be made white as Snow, and as Wool (k) and if " such a Revolter as I am be brought to Eternal Glory, " Earth must, so far as it is known, be filled with Wonder " and Heaven with Praise; and the greatest Sinner may " chearfully apply for Pardon, if I, the chief of Sinners, " find it. And on that, when I have lain mourning, " and as it were bleeding at Thy Feet, as long as Thou " thinkest

(c) Pfal. l. 5. (d) 1 Cor. xi. 27. (e) Mal. iii. 5. (f) Jer. iii. 18. (g) Rev. xviii. 5. (h) Jer. li. 9. (i) Pfal. cviii. 4. (k) lfai 1, 12.

A Prayer for one fallen into grofs Sin. Chap. 23. " thinkest proper, Thou wouldst at length heal this Soul of mine which has finned against Thee (1); and give "- me Beauty for Affees, the Oil of Joy for Murning, and " the Garment of Praise for the Spirit of Heaviness (m)! " Oh that thou wouldst at length restore unto me the for of Thy Salvation, and make me to hear Songs of Glad-" nejs, that the Bones which thou haft bri n may rejoice " (n)! Then, when a Sense of Thy forgiving Love is " fhed abroad upon my Heart, and it is cheared with " the Voice of Pardon, I will proclaim thy Grace to others; I will teach Transgreffers thy Ways, and Sin " ners shall be converied unto I bee (0): Those that have been backflding from Thee, mall be encouraged to " feek Thee by my happy Experience, which I will " gladly preclaim for Thy Glory, tho' it be to my own Shame and Confusion of Face. And may this " Joy of my Lord be my Strength (p)! fo that in it I may, " lerve Thee henceforward with a Vigour and Zeal " far beyond what I have hitherto known! "This I would ask with all humble Submission to Thy "Will; for I presume not to infift upon it. If Thou " shouldst see fit to make me a Warning to others, by se appointing that I should walk all my Days in Dark-" nefs, and at last die under a cloud, I'by Will be done! " But O Gon, extend Mercy for thy Son's Sake, to " this finful Soul at last; and give me some Place, tho' " it were at the Feet of all Thine other Servants, in the 66 Regions of Glory! Oh bring me at length, tho' it " should be thro' the gloomiest Valley that any have ever passed, into that bleffed World, where I shall depart from God no more, where I shall wound my own Conscience, and dishonour Thy Holy Name no " more! Then thall my Tongue be loofed, how long foever it might here be bound under the Confusion of Guilt; and immortal Praises shall be paid to that victorious Blood, which has redeemed fuch an infamous " Slave of Sin, as I must acknowledge myself to be, and brought me, from Returns into Bondage and repeated " Pollution, to share the Dignity and Holiness of those, " who are Kings and Priests unto GOD (q). Amen" (a) Pfal. li. 8, 12. (1) Pfal. xli. 4. (m) Ifai. lx1. 3. (p) Nch, viii. 10. (o) Pial. li. 13. (q) Rev. i. 6,

C H A P. XXIV.

The Case of the Christian under the Hidings of God's Face.

The Phrase Scriptural &. 1. It signifies the withdrawing the Tokens of the Divine Favour, §. 2. chiefly as to Spiritual Considerations. §. 3. This may become the Case of any Christian, §. 4. and will be found a very forrowful one; §. 5. The following Directions therefore, are given to those who suppose it to be their own: I. To enquire whether it be indeed a Cafe of Spiritual Diffress, or whether a disconsolate Frame may not proceed from Indisposition of Body, & 6. or Difficulties, as to worldly Circumfances. § 7. If it be found to be indeed fuch, as the Title of the Chapter proposes, be advised, II. To confider it as a merciful Dispensation of GOD, to awaken and befir the Soul; and excite to a Ariel Examination of Conscience, and Reformation of what has been amis. §. 8, 9. III. To be bumble and patient while the Trial continues. 5. 10. IV. To go on steadily in the Way of Duty. § 11. V. To renew a believing Application to the Blood of Fesus. S. 12. An bumble Supplication for one under these mournful Exerercises of Mind, when they are found to proceed from the Spiritual Cafe supposed.

§. 1. THERE is a Case which often occurs in the Christian Life, which they who accustom themselves much to the Exercise of Devotion, have been used to call the Hiding of GOD's Face. It is a Phrase borrowed from the Word of God, which I hope may shelter it from Contempt at the first Hearing. It will be my Business in this Chapter to state it as plainly as I

can, and then to give some Advice as to-your own Conduct when you fall into it, as it is very probable you may before you have sinished your Journey thro'this Wilderness.

§. 2. THE Meaning of it may partly be understood by the opposite Phrase of God's causing his Face to shine upon a Person, or lifting up upon him the Light of His Countenance. This feems to carry in it an Allusion to the pleafant and delightful Appearance which the Face of a Friend has, and especially if in a superior Relation of Life, when he converses with those whom he loves and delights in. Thus Job, when speaking of the Regard pad him by his Attendants, fays, If I smiled ut on them, they believed it not, and the Light of my Countenance they cast not down (a); that is, they were careful, in such an agreeable Circumstance to do nothing to displease me, or (as we speak) to cloud my Brown. And David, when expressing his Desire of the Manifestation of God's Favour to him, fays, Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy Countenance upon me; and as the Effect of it, declares, Thou hast put Gladness into my Heart more than if Corn and Wine increased (b). Nor is it impossible, that in this Phrase, as used by David, there may be some Alusion to the bright shining forth of the Shekinah, that is the Lustre which dwelt in the Cloud as the vinble Sign of the Divine Presence with Israel, which God was pleased peculiarly to manifest upon some publick Occasions, as a Token of his Favour and Acceptance.—On the other Hand therefore, for God to bide his Face, mult imply the with-holding the Tokens of his Favour, and mult be esteemed a Mark of His Displeasure. Thus Isaiab uses it; Your Iniquities bave separated between you and your GOD and your Sins have bid His Face from you, that He will not bear (c). And again, Thou baft hid iby Face from us, as not regarding the Calamities we fuffer, and bast consumed as, because of our Iniquities (d . So likewise, for God to bide His Face from our Sins (c), fignifies to overlook them, and to take no farther Notice of them. The Jame Idea is, at other Times, expressed by GOD's b. ding His Eyes (i) from Persons of a Character disagreeC

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⁽a) Job xxix. 24.

⁽b) Pfal. iv. 6, 7. (c) Pfal. 1.9.

⁽f) Ifai. i. 15.

Chap. 24. with Respect to Spiritual Consideration able to Him, when they come to address Him, with their Petitions, not vouchfafing (as it were) to look towards them. This is plainly the Scriptural Sense of the Word; and agreeably to this, it is generally used by Christians in our Day, and every Thing which seems a Token of Divine Displeasure towards them is expressed

by it.

6. 3, Ir is farther to be observed here, that the Things which they judge to be Manifestations of Divine Favour towards them, of Complacency in them, are not only, nor chiefly of a Temporal Nature, or such as merely relate to the Bleffings of this Animal and periffing Life. David, tho' the Promises of the Law had a continual Reference to fuch, yet was taught to look farther, and describes them as preferable to, and therefore plainly distinct from, the Bleffings of the Corn-Floor, or the Wine-Press (g). And if you, to whom I am now addressing, do not know them to be so, it is plain you are quite ignorant of the Subject we are enquiring into, and indeed are yet to take out the first Lessons of true Religion. All that David fays, of beholding the Beauty of the Lord (h), or being fatished as with Marrow and Fatness, when be remembered him on his Bed (i), as well as with the Goodness of his House, even of his Holy Temple (k), is to be taken in the same Sense, and can need very little Explication to the truly experienced Soul. But those that have known the Light of GOD's Countenance, and the Shinings of his Face, will, in proportion to the Degree of that Knowledge, be able to form some Notion of the Hiding of bis Face, or the withdrawing of the Tokens He has given his People of His Presence and Favour, which fometimes greatly imbitters Prosperity; as where the contrary is found, it sweetens Afflictions, and often swallows up the Sense of them.

1. 4. And give me leave to remind you, my Christian Friend, (for under that Character I now address my Reader,) that to be thus deprived of the Senle of God's Love, and of the Tokens of His Favour, may foon be the Case with you, tho' you may now have the Pleasure

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⁽g) Pfal. iv. 7.

⁽h) Pfal. xxvii. 4.

⁽i) Pfal. lxiii. v. 6.

This may foon be the Cafe with you? Chap. 24. 240 to fee the Candle of the Lord fining upon him, or tho' it may even feem to be Sun-shine and High Noon in your Soul. You may lose your lively Views of the Divine Perfections and Glories, in the Contemplation of which you now find that inward Satisfaction. You may think of the Divine Wisdom and Power, of the Divine Mercy and Fidelity, as well as of His Righteousness and Holiness, and feel little inward Complacency of Soul in the Views. It may be, with Respect to any lively Impresfions, as if it were the (ontempiation merely of a common Object. It may feem to you, as if you had loft all Idea of those important Words, tho' the View has sometimes swallowed up your whole Soul in Transports of Altonisment, Admiration, and Love. You may lofe your delightful Sense of the Divine Favour. It may be Matter of great and fad Doubt with you, whether you do indeed belong to GoD; and all the Work of His Blefled Spirit may be to veiled and shaded in the Soul, that the peculiar Characters, by which the Hand of that Sacred Agent might be diffinguished, shall be in a great Measure lost; and you may be ready to imagine, you have only deluded yourfell in all the former Hopes you have entertained. In Consequence of this, those Ordihances, in which you now rejoice, may grow very uncomfortable to you, even when you do indeed defire Communion with God in them. You may bear the most delightful Evangelical Truths opened, you may hear the Privileges of God's Children most affectionately represented, and not be aware that you have any Part or Lot in this Matter; and from that very Coldness and Infentibility may be drawing a farther Argument, that you have nothing to do with them And then your Heart may meditate Terror (1), and under the Dittress that overwheims you, your dearest Enjoyments may be reflected upon as adding to the Weight of it, and making it more fenfible, while you consider that you had once fuch a Tafte for these Things, and have now lost it all. So that perhaps it may feem to you, that they, who never felt any Thing at all of Religious Impressions, are happier than you, or at least are less miserable. You may perhaps

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perhaps in these melancholy Hours, even doubt, whether you have ever prayed at all, and whether all that you called your Enjoyment of God, were not some to see Delight, excited by the great Enemy of Souls, to make you apprehend that your State was good, that so you

might continue his more secure Prey.

6- 5. Such as this may be your Case for a considerable Time; and Ordinances may be attended in vain, and the Presence of God may be in vain sought in them. You may pour out your Soul in private, and then come to publick Worship, and find little Satisfaction in either; but be forced to take up the Pialmift's Complaint; My God, I cry in the Day-time, but thou hearest not; and in the Night Season, and am not filent (m); or that of Job, Bebold I go forward, but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; on the left Hand where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him; He bideth himself on the right Hand that I cannot see Him (n): So that all, which looked like Religion in your Mind, shall seem as it were, to be melted into Grief, or chilled into Fear, or crushed into a deep Sense of your own Unworthiness; in Consequence of which, you shall not dare so much as to lift up your Eyes before Goo, and be almost ashamed to take your Place in a worshipping Assembly among any that you think His Servants. I have known this to be the Case of some excellent Christians, whose Improvements in Religion have been diffinguished, and whom God hath honoured above many of their Brethren in what he hath done for them, and by them. Give me leave therefore, having thus described it, to offer you some plain Advices with Regard to it; and let not that be imputed to Entbuhaftick Fancy, which proceeds from an intimate and frequent View of Facts on the one Hand, and from a fincere affectionate Defire, on the other, to relieve the tender pious Heart in so desolate a State. At least, I am persuaded, the Attempt will not be overlooked or disapproved by the great Shetherd of the Sheep (0), who has charged us to comfort the Feeble-minded (p).

⁽m) Pfal. xxii. 2. (n) Job xxiii. 8, 9. (o) Heb. xii. 20. (p) 1 Thess. y. 14.

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6. 6. And here I would first advise you most carefully to enquire, Whether your present Distress does indeed arise from Causes which are truly Spiritual? Or whe. ther it may not rather have its Foundation in some Diforder of Body, or in the Circumstances of Life, in which you are providentially placed, which may break your Spirits and deject your Mind? The Influence of the inferior Part of our Nature, on the nobler, the Immortal Spirit, while we continue in this embodied State, is fo evident, that no attentive Person can, in the general, fail to have observed it; and yet, these are Cases, in which it feems not to be sufficiently considered; and perhaps your own may be one of them. The State of the Blood is often fuch, as necessarily to suggest gloomy Ideas even in Dreams, and to indispose the Soul for taking Pleasure in any Thing : and when it is so, why should it be imagined to proceed from any peculiar Divine Displeasure, it is does not find its usual Delight in Religion? Or why should God be thought to have departed from us, because he suffers natural Causes to produce natural Effects, without opposing by Miracle to break the Connection? When this is the Case, the Help of the Physician is to be fought, rather than that of the Divine, or at least by all Means, together with it; and Medicine, Diet, Exercise and Air, may, in a few Weeks, effect that, which the strongest Reasonings, the most pathetick Exhortations or Confolations, might for many Months have attempted in vain.

§. 7. In other Instances, the Dejection and Feebleness of the Mind may rise from something uncomfortable in our worldly Circumstances; these may cloud as
well as distract the Thoughts, and imbitter the Temper, and thus render us in a great Degree unsit for Religious Services or Pleasures; and when it is so, the Remedy is to be sought in Submission to Divine Providence,
in abstracting our Affections as far as possible from the
present World, in a prudent Care to ease ourselves of
the Burthen so far as we can, by moderating unnecessary Expences, and by diligent Application to Busness, in humble Dependance on the Divine Blessing; in
the mean Time, endeavouring by Faith to look up to

him, who sometimes suffers his Children to be bought into such Difficulties, that he may endear himself more sensibly to them by the Method he shall take for their Relief.

6. 8. On the Principles here laid down, it may perhaps appear on Enquiry, that the Diffress complained of; may have a Foundation very different from what was at first supposed. But where the Health is found, and the Circumstances easy; when the Animal Spirits are disposed for Gaiety and Entertainment, while all Tafte for Religious Pleasure is in a Manner gone; when the Soul is leized with a kind of Lethargick Infenfibility, or what I had almost called, a paralytick Weakness, with Respect to every Religious Exercise, even tho' there should not be that deep te rifying Diffress, or pungent Amazement, which I before represented as the Effect of Melancholy; nor that Anxiety about the Accommodations of Life, which fraight Circumstances naturally preduce: I would in that Case vary my Advice, and urge you, with all possible Attention and Impartiality, to fearch into the Caufe which has brought upon you that great Evil, under which you juttly mourn. And, probably, in the general, the Cause is Sin; some fecret Sin which has not been discovered or observed, by the Eye of the World; for Enormities that draw on them the Observation and Censure of others, will probably fall under the Case mentioned in the former Chapter, as they must be instances of known and deliberate Guilt. Now the Eye of God hath feen thefe Evils which have escaped the Notice of your Fellow-Creatures; and in Consequence of this Care to conceal them from others, while you could not but know they were open to him, God has feen himself in a peculiar Manner affronted, and injured, I had almost said infulted by them: And hence his Righteous Displeasure. Oh! let that never be forgotten, which is so plainly iaid, so commonly known, so familiar to almost every Religious Ear, yet too little felt oy any of our Hearts, Your Iniquities have separated between you and your GOD, and your Sins have bid bis Face from you that he will not bear (9), And this is, on the whole, a merciful Difpensation

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pensation of God, tho' it may seem severe; regardit not therefore, merely as your Calamity, but as intended to awaken you, that you may not content yourself, even with lying in Tears of Huminiation before the Lord, but like Joshua rise and exert yourself vigorously, to put away from you that accursed Thing whatever it be. Let this be your immediate and earnest Care, that your Pride may be humbled, that your Watchfulness may be maintained, that your Affections to the World may be deadened, and that on the whole, your Fitness for Heaven may in every Respect be increased. These are the Designs of your Heavenly Father, and let it be your

great Concern to co-operate with them.

6. 9. RECEIVE it therefore on the whole, as the most important Advice that can be given you, immediately to enter on a Brist Examination of your Conscience. Attend on its gentlest Whispers. It a Suspicion arises in your Mind, that any Thing has not been right, trace that Suspicion, search into every secret Folding of your Heart; improve to the Purpoles of a fuller Discovery, the Advices of your Friends, the Reproaches of your Enemies; recollect for what your Heart hath smitten you at the Table of the Lord, for what it would imite you, if you were upon a dying Bed, and within this Hour to enter on Eternity. When you have made any Discovery, note it down, and go on in your Search till you can fay, these are the remaining Corruptions of my Heart, these are the Sins and Follies of my Life; this have I neglected: this have I done amis. And when the Account is as complete as you can make it, set your felf in the Strength of God to a strenuous Reformation, or rather begin the Reformation of every Thing that feems amis as soon as ever you discover it; Resurn to the Almighty and thou shalt be built up; and put Iniquity far from thy Tabernacle, then shalt thou have thy Delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy Face unto GOD. Thou shalt make thy Prayer unto Him and He shall beat thee, thou shalt pay thy Vows unto Him, and His Light shall shine upon thy Ways (r), . 10. IN

(r) Job xxii. 23, 26, 27.

Chap. 24. Be bumble, and go on in the Way of Duty. 245.

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6. 10. In the mean Time be waiting for God with the deepest Humility, and submit yourself to the Discipline of your Heavenly Father, acknowledging his lustice, and hoping in his Mercy; even when your Conscience is least severe in its Remonstrances, and discovers nothing more than the common Infirmities of God's People; yet still bow yourself down before Him, and own, that so many are the Evils of your best Days, so many the Impersections of your best Services, that by them you have deserved all, and more than all that you fuffer; deserved, not only that your Sun should be clouded, but that it should go down, and arise no more, but leave your Soul in a State of everlasting Darkness. And while the Shade continues, be not impatient. Fret not your se'f in any wife, but rather with a holy Calmnes and Gentleness of Soul, wait on the Lord (s). Be willing to flay his Time, willing to bear his Frown, in humble hope that He will at length return and bave Compassion on you (t). He has not utterly forgetten to be gracious, nor refolved, that He will be favourable no more (u). For the Lord will not cast off for ever; but the He cause Grief, yet will He have Compassion according to the Multitude of His Mercies (x). It is comparatively but for a small Moment that He bides His Face from you; but you may humbly hope, that with great Mercies He will gather you, and that with everlasting Kindness He will bave Mercy on you (y). The fuitable Words are not mine, but His; and they wear this, as in the very Front of them, "That a Soul under the Hidings of GOD's "Face, may at last be one whom He will gather, and " to whom he will extend everlasting Favour."

the Way of your Duty." Continue the Use of Means and Ordinances: Read and meditate: Pray, yes, and fing the Praises of God too, tho' it may be with a heavy Heart. Follow the Footsleps of bis Flock (2); you may perhaps meet the Shepherd of Souls in doing it. Place yourself at least in his Way. It is possible you may by this Means get a kind Look from him; and one Look, one Turn of Thought which may happen in a Moment,

⁽s) Pfal. xxxvii, 8, 34. (t) Jer. xii. 15. (u) Pfal. lxxvii. 7. 9. (x) Lam. iii. 31, 32. (y) Itai. liv. 7, 8. (z) Cant. i. 8.

Renew your Application to Christ; Chap. 24. may as it were create a Heaven in your Soul at once. Go to the Table of the Lord. If you cannot rejoice, go and mourn there. Go and mourn that Saviour, whom by your Sins you have pierced (a); go and lament the Breaches of that Covenant, which you have there fooften confirmed. CHRIST may perhaps make himself known unto you in the Breaking of Bread (b) and you may find, to your Surprize, that he bath been near you, when you imagined he was at the greatest Distance from you; near you, when you thought you were cast out from his Presence, Seek your Comforts in such Employments as these; and not in the vain Amusements of the World, and in the Pleasures of Sense. I shall never forget that affectionate Expression, which I am well assured broke out from an eminently pious Heart, then almost ready to break under its Sorrows of this Kind ! " Lord, if I may not enjoy Thee, " let me enjoy nothing else; but go down mourning after "Thee to the Grave!" I wondered not to hear, that almost as foon as this Sentiment had been breathed out before God in Prayer, the Burden was taken off, and the Joy of GOD's Salvation reflored.

6. 12. I SHALL add but one Advice more; and that is, " That you renew your Application to the Blood of " Jejus, thro' whom the Reconciliation between Gos " and your Soul has been accomplished." It is he that is our Peace, and by bis Blood it is that we are made nigh (c): It is in him, as the Beloved of his Soul, that GOD declares, he is well pleased (d); and it is in bim that we are made accepted, to the Glory of his Grace (e). Go therefore, O Christian, and apply by Faith to 1 crucified Saviour: Go and apply to him as to a merciful High-Priest, and your out thy Complaint before him, and show before him thy Trouble (t). I ay open the Diffress and Anguish of thy Soul to him, who once knew what it was to fay, (O aftonishing! that he of all others floud ever have faid it,) My GOD, My GOD, why hast I how for Jaken me (2) ? Look up for Pity and Relief to him, who bimjelf suffered, being not only tempted, but with Regard to tenfible Manifestations deferted : that He

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⁽a) Zech. xii. 10. (d, Matt. iii. 17. (g) Matt. xxvii. 46.

⁽b) Inke xxiv. 35. (c) Eph. i. 6.

⁽c) Lph. ii. 13, 14 (i) Pfal. exhick

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(h) Heb. ii. 18.

(1) Pfal, xc. 15.

He might thus know bow to pity those that are in such a melancholy Cafe, and be ready, as well as able, to fuccour them (h). He is Immanuel, GOD with us (i); and it is only in and thro' him, that his Father shines forth upon us with the mildest Beams of Mercy and of Love. Let it be therefore your immediate Care, to renew your Acquaintance with him. Review the Records of his Life and Death: Hear his Words: Behold his Actions: And when you do fo, furely you will find a facred Sweetness diffusing itself over your Soul. You will be brought into a calm, gentle, filent Frame, in which Faith and Love will operate powerfully, and God may probably cause the fill small Voice of his comforting Spirit to be heard (k), till your Soul burfts out into a Song of Praise, and you may be made glad according to the Days in which you have been afflicted (1). In the mean Time, fuch Language as the following Supplication speaks, may be suitable.

An humble Supplication for one under the Hidings of GOD's Face.

BLESSED GOD! with Thee is the Fountain.
" of Life (m), and of Happiness. I adore Thy " Name that I have ever tafted of Thy Streams; that " I have ever felt the peculiar Pleasure arising from the Light of Thy Countenance, and the shedding abroad " of Thy Love on my Soul. But alas, these delightful Seasons are now to me no more; and the Remem-" brance of them engages me to pour out my Soul within " me (n). I would come, as I have formerly done, " and call Thee with the same Endearment, my Father, " and my GOD: But alas, I know not how to do it. " Guilt and Fear arise, and sorbid the delightful Language. I feek Thee, O Lord, but I feek Thee in vain. I would pray, and my Lips are sealed up. I " would read Thy Word, and all the Promises of it are veiled from mine Eyes. I frequent those Ordinances, empted, which have been formerly most nourishing and comd: that fortable to my Soul; but alas, they are only the He " Shadows of Ordinances : The Substance is gore: . 13, 14 M 2 be line cxille &

(m) Pial, xxxiv. 9.

(k) I Kings xix. 12.

(n) Pial. xiii. 4.

(x) Matt. xxvii. 46.

(u) PlaLxxxv. 3.

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chap. 24. under the Hidings of GOD's Face.

" anoint my Head with the Oil of Gladness, and clothe

" me with the Garments of Salvation (z)!

" Ob that I knew where I might find Thee (a)! Oh " that I knew what it is that has engaged Thee to de.

" part from me! I am fearching and trying my Ways (b):

" Oh that Thou wouldst fearch me, and know my Heart, try me, and know my Thoughts; and if there be any

" wicked Way in me, discover it, and lead me in the Way

" everlasting (c); in that Way, in which I may find Rest " and Peace for my Soul (d), and feel the Discoveries of

" Thy Love in Chrift!

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" O God, who didst command the Light to shine out of " Darkness (e), speak but the Word, and Light shall " dart into my Soul at once ! Open Thou my Lips, and my " Mouth fall frew forth thy Praise (f), shall burft out " into a chearful Song, which shall display before those, " whom my present Dejections may have discouraged,

" the Pleasures and Supports of Religion!

"Yet, Lord, on the whole, I submit to Thy Will. "If it is thus that my Faith must be exercised, by walk-" ing in Darkness for Days, and Months, and Years to " come, how long foever they may feem, how long to-" ever they may be, I will fabrit. till will I adore " Thee, as the GOD of Ifrael, and the Saviour, tho' " Thou art a GOD that bidest thyself (g) : Sill will I " trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay my fell upon my "GOD (h); trufting in Thee, the Thou Ray me (i); and " waiting for Thee, more than they that watch for the " Morning, yea, more than they that watch for the " Morning (k). Peradventure in the Evening Time it " ma, be Light (1). I know, that Thou hast forge cimes " manifested Thy Compassions to Thy dying Servants. " and given them, in the lowest Ebb of their Natural Spirits, a full Tide of Divine Glory, thus turning Darkness into Light before them (m). So may it " please Thee to gild the Valley of the Shadow of Death with the Light of Thy Presence, when I am passing M 3 "three M 3

(z) Ifa. lxi. 10. (b) Lam iii, 40: (a) Job. xxiii. 3. (e) 2 Cor. IV. 6.

c) Pial. cxxxix. 23, 24. (d) Jer. vi. 16. 1) Pial. li. 15. (g) Ifai. xlv. 15. (h) Ifai. 1. 19.

1) Job xiii. 15. (1) Zech. xiv. 7. (k) Pfal. cx xx. 6. m, Mai. xiii. x6!

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Chap. 24.

thre' it, and to stretch forth Thy Rod and Thy Staff to comfort me (n), that my Tremblings may cease, and

the Gloom may echo with Songs of Praise! But if it

be Thy fovereign Pleasure, that Distress and Darkness should still continue to the last Motion of my

" Pulse, and the last Gasp of my Breath, Oh let it

" cease with the parting Struggle, and bring me to that

" Light which is fown for the Rightcous, and to that Gladness which is reserved for the Upright in Heart (0);

" to the unclouded Regions of everlatting Splendor and

" Joy, where the full Anointings of Thy Spirit shall

" be poured out on all Thy People, and Thou wilt no more bide Thy Face from any of them (p)!

" This, Lord, is Thy Salvation for which I am weit-

" ing (q); and whilst I feel the Defires of my Soul

" drawn out after it, I will never despair of obtaining

" it. Continue and increase those Desires, and at length satisfy and exceed them all, thro' the Riches of Thy

" Grace in Christ Jesus! Amen."

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(a) Pfal. xxiii. 4. (o) Pfal. xcvii. 11. (p) Izek, xxxix. 29. (q) Gen, xlix. 18.

CHAP

CHAP. XXV.

The Christian struggling under great and heavy Afflictions.

Here it is advised, (1.) That Afflictions should be expected, §. 1. (2.) That the Righteous Hand of GOD should be acknowledged in them, when they come, § 2. (3.) That they should be borne with Patience, §: 3. (4.) That the Divine Conduct in them should be cordially approved, §. 4. (5.) That Thankfulness should be mained tained in the Midst of Trials, §. 5. (6.) That the Defign of Afflictions should be diligently enquired into, and all proper Assistance taken in discovering it, §. 6. (7.) That when it is discovered, it should humbly be complied with and answered, §. 7. A Prayer suited to such a Case.

1. CINCE Man is born unto Trouble, as the Sparks fly upward (a); and Adam has entailed on all his Race the fad Inheritance of Calamity in their Way to Death, it will certainly be prudent and necessary, that we should all expect to meet with Trials and Afflictions; and that you, Reader, whoever you are, should b endeavouring to gird on your Armour, and put your, felf in a Posture to encounter those Trials, which will fall to your Lot, as a Man, and a Christian. Prepare yourself to receive your Afflictions and to endure them, in a Manner agreeable to both those Characters. this View, when you fee others under the Burden, consider how possible it is, that you may be called out to the very same Difficulties, or to others equal to hem. Put your Soul as in the Place of theirs. Think, how you could endure the Load, under which they lie;

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(a) Job. v. 7

and endeavour at once, to comfort them, and to strengthen your own Heart; or rather pray, that God would do it. And observing how liable mortal Life is to such Sorrows, moderate your Expectations from it; raise your Thoughts above it; and form your Schemes of Happiness, only for that World, where they cannot be disappointed: In the mean Time, blessing God, that your Prosperity is lengthened out thus far, and ascribing it to His special Providence, that you continue so long unwounded, when so many Showers of Arrows are stying around you, and so many are falling by them, on the Right-Hand, and on the Left.

§. 2. When at length your Turn comes, as it certainly will, from the first Hour in which an Affliction seizes you, realize to yourself the Hand of GOD in it, and lose not the View of Him in any Second Cause, which may have proved the immediate Occasion. Let it be your first Care, to bumble yourself under the mighty Hand of GOD, that He may exalt you in due Time (b). Own that He is just in all that is brought upon you (c), and that in all these Things, He punishes you less than your Iniquities deserve (d). Compose yourself to bear His Hand with Patience, to glorify His Name by a Submission to His Will, and to fall in with the gracious Design of this Visitation, as well as to wait the Issue of it quietly,

whatfoever the Event may be.

§. 3. Now that Patience may have its perfect Work (e), reflect frequently, and deeply, upon your own Meanness and Sinfulness. Consider, how often every Mercy has been forfeited, and every Judgment deserved, And consider too, how long the Patience of God hath borne with you, and how wonderfully it is still exerted towards you; and indeed not only His Patience, but His Bounty too. Afflicted as you are, (for I speak to you now as actually under the Pressure) look round and survey your remaining Mercies, and be gratefully sensible of them. Make the Supposition of their being removed: What if God should stretch out His Hand against you, and add Poverty to Pain, or Pain to Poverty, or the Loss of Friends to both; or the Death of

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(f) i T

⁽b) 1 Pet. v. 6.

⁽c) Nch. ix. 33.

⁽d) Ezr. ix. 13

Chap. 25.

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ur-13 furviving Friends to that of those whom you are now morning over, would not the Wound be more grievous? Adore his Goodness, that this is not the Case; and take heed, lest your Unthankfulness should provoke Him to multiply your Sorrows. Consider also, the Need you have of Discipline; how wholesome it may prove to your Souls, and what merciful Designs our Heavenly Father has, in all the Corrections He sends upon His Children.

§. 4. NAY I will add, That in Consequence of all these Considerations it may well be expected, not only that you should submit to your Assistance as what you cannot avoid, but that you should sweetly acquiesce in the m, and approve them; that you should not only justify, but glorify God in sending them; that you should glorify him with your Heart, and with your Lips too. Think not Praise unsuitable on such an Occasion; nor think that Praise alone to be suitable, which takes its Rise from remaining Comforts: But know that it is your Duty, not only to be thankful in your Assistance.

But to be thankful on Account of them.

§. 5. God Himfelf has faid, In every Thing give Thanks (f); and he has taught His Servants to fay, Yea also we glory in Tribulation (g). And most certain it is, that to true Believers they are Instances of Divine Mercy; for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son, whom He receiveth, with peculiar and diftinguished Endearment (h). View your present Afflictions in this Light, as Chastifements of Love; and then let your own Heart say, whether Love does not demand Think with yourfelf, " It is thus that God is Praise. " making me conformable to His own Son; it is thus " that He is training me up for compleat Glory. Thus " He kills my Corruptions; thus He strengthens my " Graces; thus He is wifely contriving to bring me " nearer to Himself, and to ripen me for the Honours " of His Heavenly Kingdom. It is, if Need be, that I " am in Heaviness (i); and He surely knows what that " Need is, better than I can pretend to teach Him; ' and knows what peculiar Propriety there is in this Affliction, to answer my present Necessity, and (i) 1 Theff. v. 18. (g) Rom. v. 3. (h) Heb, xii. 6. (i) i Pet. i. 6. 254 Care to be taken to answer its Design, Chap. 25;

"do me that peculiar Good which he is graciously intending me by it. This Tribulation shall work Pa-

tience, and Patience Experience, and Experience a more

" affured H pe; even a Hope which shall not make ashamed, while the Love of GOD is shed abroad in my

"Heart (k), and shines thro' my Assistion, like the

"Sun thro' a gentle descending Cloud, darting in Light upon the Shade, and mingling Fruitsulness

with Weeping."

. 6. 6. LET it be then your earnest Care, while you thus look on your Affliction, whatever it may be, as coming from the Hand of God, to improve it to the Purpofes for which it was fent. And that you may so improve it, let it be your first Concern, to know what those Purp ses are. Summon up all the Attention of your Soul, to bear the Rod, and Him who hath appointed it (1); and pray earneftly that you may understand is Voice. Examine your Life, your Words, and your Heart; and pray, that God would fo guide your Enquiries, that you may return unto the Lord that smitth you (m). To affift you in this, call in the Help of pious Friends, and particularly of your Ministers: Intreat, not only their Prayers, but their Advices too, as to the probable Defign of Providence: and encourage them freely to tell you any Thing which occurs to their Minds upon this Head. And if such an Occasion should lead them to touch upon some of the Impersections of your Character and Conduct, look upon it as a great Token of their Faiendship, and take it, not only patiently, but thankfully. It does but ill become a Christian, at any Time, to resent Reproofs and Admonitions: and least of all does it become him, when the Rebukes of his Heavenly Father are upon him He ought rather to feek Admonitions, at fuch a Time as this, and voluntarily offer his Wounds to be fearched by a faithful and skilful Hand.

§. 7. And when by one Means or another, you have got a Ray of Light to direct you in the Meaning and Language of fuch Dispensations, take heed, that you have, in any Degree, harden yourself against GOD as

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exalted Moments of your Life. For this Purpose, let Prayer be your frequent Employment; and let such Sentiments as these, if not in the very same Terms, be of-

THOU supreme, yet all righteous and gracious "Governor of the whole Universe! Mean and inconfiderable as this little Province of Thy spacious " Empire may appear, Thou dost not difregard the " Earth and its Inhabitants; but attendest to its Con-" cerns with the most condescending and gracious "Regards. Thou reignest, and I rejoice in it, as it is indeed Matter of universal Joy (p). I believe Thy " universal Providence and Care; and I firmly believe "Thy wife, holy, and kind Interpolition in every " Thing which relates to me, and to the Circumstances " of my Abode in this World. I would look thro " all inferior Causes unto Thee, whose Eyes are upon " all Thy Creatures; to Thee, who formest Light, " and createst Darkness, who makest Peace; and createst M 6 " Evil;

(n) Lev. xxvi. 27. (o) Pfal, cxix: 71. (p) Pfal, xcvii. 1.

(r) Ezr. ix. 13:

(q) Ifa. xlv. 7.

(t) Heb. Aii. 9, 10

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(s) Lam. 111, 22

Chap. 25. under the Pressure of heavy Affliction. " acquiesce and rest in Thy Will, as well as stoop to it; " and would fay, Good is the Word of the Lord (u) : And " I defire that not only my Lips, but my Soul may ac-" quiesce. Yea, Lord, I would praise Thee, that Thou " wilt shew so much Regard to me, as to apply such " Remedies as these to the Diseases of my Mind, and art thus kindly careful to train me up for Glory. I " have no Objection against being afflicted, against " being afflisted in this particular Way. The Cup which " my Father puts into my Hand, shall I not drink it (x)? " By thine Affiliance and Support I will. Only be " pleased, O Lord, to stand by me, and sometimes to " grant me a favourable Look in the Midst of my Suf-" ferings! Support my Soul, I befeech Thee, by Thy " Confolations mingled with my Tribulation; and I " shall glory in those Tribu'ations, that are thus allayed! " It has been the Experience of many, who have re-" flected on afflicted Days with Pleafure, and have ac-" knowledged that their Comforts have swallowed up " their Sorrows. And after all that Thou hast done, " are Thy Marcies restrained (y)? Is Thy Hand waxed " Short (z) ? or canst Thou not still do the same for me? " If my Heart be less tender, less sensible, Thou " canst cure that Disorder, and canst make this Afflic-" tion the Means of curing it. Thus let it be; and at " length in Thine own due Time, and in the Way " which Thou shalt chuse, work out Deliverance for " me; and shew me Thy marvellous Loving-kindness, O " Thou that favest by Thy Right-Hand, them that put their " Trust in Thee (a)! For I well know, that how dark " foever this Night of Affliction feem, if Thou fayest, " Let there be Light, there shall be Light. But I would " urge nothing, before the Time Thy Wisdom and "Goodness shall appoint. I am much more conce ned " that my Afflictions may be fanctified, than that they " may be removed. Number me, O God, among the " bappy Persons, whom whilft Thou chastenest, Thou " teachest out of Thy Law (b)! Show me, I beseech " Thee, wherefore Thou contendest with me (c); and ' purify

⁽a) 2 Kings xx. 19. (x) John xviii. 11. (y) Ifai. Ixiii. 15. (z) Numb. xi. 25. (a) Pfal. xvii. 7. (b) Pfal. xciv. 12: (c) Job. x. 2.

the Living GOD (e)! In Thy Presence, and under the Support of that Love, I can bear any Thing; and am willing to bear it, if I may grow more lovely in Thine Eyes, and more meet for Thy Kingdom. The Days of my Affliction will have an End; the Hour will at length come, when Thou will wipe away all my Tears (f). The it tarry, I would wait for it, (g). My foolish Heart, in the midst of all its Trials, is ready to grow fond of this Earth, disappointing and grievous as it is: And graciously, O God, dost Thou deal with me, in breaking these Bonds that would tie me faster to it. O let my Soul be girding itself up, and (as it were) stretching its Wings in Expectation of that blessed Hour, when it shall drop all its Sorrows and Incumbrances at once, and soar away to expatiate with infinite Delight in the Resignors of Liberty, Peace, and Joy! Amen."

(d) Heb. xii. 10. (e) Pfal. lx x xiv. 2. (f) Rev. xxi. 4. (g) Hab. ii. 3.

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CHAP, XXVI.

The Christian affisted in examining into his Growth in Grace.

The Examination important, §. 1. Fa'se Marks of Growth to be avoided, §. 2. True Marks proposed; such as, (1.) Increasing Love to GOD, §. 3. (2) Benevolence to Men, §. 4. (3.) Candour of Disposition, §. 5. (4). Meekness under Injuries, §. 6. (5) Serenity amidst the Uncertainties of Life, §. 7. (6.) Humility, §. 8. especially as expressed in Evangelical Exercises of Mind towards Christ and the Spirit, §. 9. (7.) Zeal for the Divine Honour, §. 10. (8.) Habitual and chearful Willingness to exchange Worlds, whenever GOD shall appoint it, §. 11. Conclusion, §. 12. The Christian breathing after Growth in Grace.

In I F by Divine Grace you have been born again, not of corruptible Seed, but of incorruptible (a), even by that Word of GOD, which liveth and abideth for ever, not only in the World and the Church, but in particular Souls in which t is fown; you will, as newborn Babes, defire the fineere Milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby (0). And tho' in the most advanced State of Religion on Earth, we are but Infants, in Comparison of what we hope to be, when in the Heavenly World, we arrive unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ (c), yet as we have fome Exercise of a fanctified Reason, we shall be solicitous that we may be growing and thriving Infants. And you my Reader, if so be you have tailed that the Lord is

Caution avainst false Marks of Growth. Chap. 26, is gracious (d), will, I doubt not, feel this Solicitude, I would therefore endeavour to affift you in making the Enquiry, whether Religion be on the Advance in your Soul. And here, I shall warn you against some faller Murks of Growth: and then, shall endeavour to lay. down others on which you may depend as more folid-In this View I would observe, that you are not to meafur your Growth in Grace, only or chiefly by your Advances in Knowledge, or in Zeal, or any other passionate Impression of the Mind; no, nor by the Fervour of Devotion alone; but by the Habitual Determi ation of the Will for GOD, and by your prevailing D'spesition to obey his Commands, to Subnit to his Desposals, and to Sub-

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6. 2. It must be allowed, that Knowledge and Affection in Religion, are indeed desireable. Without some Degree of the former, Religion cannot be rational; and it is very reasonable to believe, that without some Degree of the latter, that it cannot be fincere, in Creature's whole Natures are constituted like ours. Yet there may be a. great deal of Speculative Knowledge, and a great deal of rapturous Affection, where there is no true Religion at all; and therefore much more, where there is no advanced State in it. The Exercise of our rational Faculties, upon the Evidences of Divine Revelation, and upon the Declaration of it as contained in Scripture, may furnish a very wicked Man with a well digested Body of ortho. dox Divinity in his Head, when not one fingle Doctrine of it has ever reached his Heart. An eloquent Description of the Sufferings of Christ, of the Solemnities of Judgment, of the Joys of the Elessed, and the Miseries of the Damned, might move the Breast even of a Man who did not firmly believe them; as we of en find ourselves strongly moved by well wrought Narrations, or Discourses, which at the same Time we know to have their Foundation in Fiction. Natural Constitution or fuch accidental Causes as are some of them too low to be here mentioned, may supply the Eyes with a Flood of Tears, which may discharge itself plenteously upon almost any Occasion that shall first arise. And a proud Impatience of Contradiction, directly

rectly opposite as it is to the gentle Spirit of Christianity, may make a Man's Blood boil, when he hears the Notions he has entertained, and especially those which he has openly and vigoroufly espoused, disputed and opposed. This may possibly lead him, in Terms of strong Indignation, to pour out his Zeal and his Rage before Gon, in a fond Conceit, that as the Gon of Truth, He is the Patron of those favourite Doctrines, by whose fair Appearances perhaps he himself is missed. And if these speculative Refinements, or these affectionate Sallies of the Mind, be confistent with a total Absence of true Religion, they are much more .pparently consistent with a very low Estate of it. I would defire to lead you, my Friend, into fublimer Notions, and juster Marks; and refer you to other Practical Writers, and above all to the Book of Goo, to prove how material they are. I would therefore intreat you, to bring your own Heart to answer, as in the Presence of Ged to fuch Enquiries as thefe.

6. 3. Do you find " Divine Love, on the whole, ad-" vancing in your Soul?" - Do you feel yourself more and more sensible of the Presence of God; and does that Sense grow more delightful to you, than it formerly was? Can you, even when your natural Spirits are weak and low, and you are not in any Frame for the Ardours and Extantes of Devotion, nevertheless find a pleafing Rest, a calm Repose of Heart, in the Thought that God is near you, and that he fees the fecret Sentiments of your Soul; while you are, as it were, labouring up the Hill, and casting a longing Eye towards Him, tho' you cannot fay you enjoy any fenfible Communications from Him? Is it agreeable to you to open your Heart to his Inspection and Regard, to present it to Him laid bare of every Disguise, and to say with David, Then, Lord, knowest thy Servant (e)! Do you find a growing Esteem and Approbation of that Sacred Law of God, which is the Transcript of His moral Perfections? Do you inwardly esteem all his Precepts concerning al Things to be right (f) ? Do you diftern, not only the Necessity, but the Reasonableness, he Beauty, the Pleasure of Obedience; and feel a grow-

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6. 4. Examine alfo, " what Affections you find in " your Heart towards those who are round about you, and " towards the rest of Mankind in general."-Do you find your Heart overflow with undiffembled and unrestrained Benevolence? Are you more sensible than you once were, of those most endearing Bonds which unite all Men, and especially all Christians, into one Community; which make them Brethren and Fellow Citizens? Do all the unfriendly Passions die and wither in your Soul, while the kind focial Affections grow and Arengthen? And the Self-Love was never the reigning Passion, since you became a true Christian; yet as some Remainders of it are still too ready to work inwardly, and to shew themselves, especially as sudden Occasions arife, do you perceive that you get Ground of them! Do you think of yourfelf only as one of a great Number, whose part cuter Interests and Concerns are of little Importance when compared with those fine Comme nity, and ought by all Means, on all Occasions, to be

'acrificed to them?

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6. 5. REPLECT especially " on the Temper of your " Mind towards those, whom an unfand fied Heart might . be ready to imagine, it had some just Excuse for ex-" cepting out of the Lift of those it loves, and towards " whom you are ready to feel a fecret Aversion, or at " least an Alienation from them."-How does your Mind fland affected towards those who differ from you in their Religious Sentiments and Practices? I do not fay that Christian Charity will require you to think, every Error harmlefs. It argues no want of Love to a Friend in some Cases, to fear lest his Disorder should prove more fatal than he feems to imagine; nay fometimes, the very Tenderness of Friendship may increase that Apprehenfion. But to hate Persons because we think they are miltaken, and to aggravate every Difference in Judgment or Practice into a fatal and damnable Error, that destroys all Christian Communion and Love, is a Symptom generally much worfe than the Evil it condemns. Do you love the Image of CHRIST in a Person, who thinks himself obliged in Conscience to profess and worship in a Manner different from yourself? Nay farther, can you love and honon; that which is truly amiable and excellent in those, in whom much is defective; in those, in whom there is a Mixture of Bigotry and Narrowness of Spirit; which may lead them perhaps to flight, or even to censure you? Can you love them, as the Disciples and Servants of CHRIST, who thro' a mistaken Zeal may be ready to cast out your Name as evil (h), and to warn others against you as a dangerous Perfon ? This is none of the least Triumphs of Charity, nor any despicable Evidence of an Advance in Religion.

you bear Injuries?"—There is a certain Hardiness of Soul in this Respect, which argues a confirmed State in Piety and Virtue. Does every Thing of this Kind hurry and ruffle you, so as to put you on Contrivances, how you may recompense, or at least, how you may disgrace and expose him, who has done you the Wrong? Or can you thand the Shock calmly, and easily divert your Mind to other Objects, only (when you recollect hese Things,) pitying and praying for those, who with

can be done, by some Benefit or other towards the in-

jurious Person to teach him a better Temper.

6. 7. Examine farther, " with Regard to the other Evils and Calamities of Life, and even with Regard to " its Uncertainties, how can you bear them ?" - Do you find your Soul is in this Respect gathering Strength? Have you fewer foreboding Fears and disquieting Alarms, than you once had, as to what may happen in Life? Can you trust the Wisdom and Goodness of Goo, to order your Affairs for you, with more Complacency and Chearfulness than formerly? Do you find, you are able to unite your I houghts more in surveying present Circumstances, that you may collect immediate Duty from them, tho' you know not what God will next appoint or call you to? And when you feel the Smart of Affliction, do you make a less Matter of it? Can you transfer your Heart more easily to Heavenly and De vine Objects, without an anxious Seticitude, whether this or that Burthen be removed, so it may but be fanctified to promote your Communion with God and your Ripenels for Glory?

§. 8. Examine also, "whether you advance in Humility"—This is a filent, but most excellent Grace; and they who are most eminent in it, are dearest to Goo, and most fit for the Communications of his Presence to them. Do you then feel your Mind more emptied of

(1) Rom. xi1. 24.

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Chap. 26. a Ready regard to Christ and the Spirit. proud and haughty Imaginations; not prone fo much to look back upon past Services, which it has performed, as forward to those which are yet before you, and inward upon the remaining Imperfections of your Heart? Do you more tenderly observe your daily Slips and Miscarriages, and find yourfelf disposed to mourn over those Things before the Lord, that once passed with you as flight Matters; tho' when you come to furvey them, as in the Presence of God, you find they were not wholly involuntary, or free from Guilt? Do you feel in your Breast deeper. Apprehension of the Infinite Majesty of the Blessed Goo, and of the Glory of his Natural and Moral Perfections; so as, in Consequence of these Views, to perceive yourself (as it were) annihilated in his Presence, and to shrink into less than Nothing, and Vanity (k)? If this be your Temper, God will look upon you with peculiar Favour, and will visit you more and more with the distinguishing Blessings of his Grace.

§. 9. Bur there is another great Branch and Effect of Christian Humility, which it would be an unpardonable Negligence to omit. Let me therefore farther enquire: Are you more frequently renewing your Application, your fincere, steady, determinate Application, to the Righteoufness and Blood of CHRIST, as being sensible how unworthy you are to appear before God, otherwise than in Him? And do the remaining Corruptions of your Heart humble you before him, tho' the Disorders of your Life are in a great Measure cured? Are you more earnest to obtain the quickening Influences of the Holy SPIRIT; and have you such a Sense of your own Weakness, as to engage you to depend, in all the Duties you perform, upon the Communications of his Grace to belp your Infirmities (1) ? Can you, at the Close of your most religious, exemplary, and useful Days, bluth before God for the Deficiencies of them, while others perhaps may be ready to admire and extol your Conduct? And while you give the Glory of all that has been right to Him, from whom the Strength and Grace has been derived, are you coming to the Blood of Sprinkling, to free you from the Guile which mingles itself even with the best of your Services? Do you learn to receive the Bounties of Providence, not

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only with Thankfulness as coming from God, but with a Mixture of Shame and Consusion too, under a Consciousness that you do not deserve them, and are continually sorfeiting them? And do you justify Providence in your Assistions and Disappointments, even while many are flourishing around you in the full Bloom of Prosperity, whose Offences have been more visible at least, and more

notorious than yours?

6. 10 Do you also advance "in Zeal and Activity, " for the Service of GOD, and the Happiness of Man-" kind?"-Does your Love shew itself solid and sincere, by a continual Flow of good Works from it? Can you view the Sorrows of others with tender Compassion, and with Projects and Contrivances what you may do to relieve them? Do you feel in your Breait, that you are more frequently deviling liberal Things (m), and ready to wave your own Advantage or Pleafure that you may accomplish them? Do you find your Imaginations teeming (as it were) with Conceptions and Schemes, for the Advancement of the Cause and Interest of CHRIST in the World, for the Propagation of his Gospel, and for the Happiness of your Fellow-Creatures? And do you not only pray, but act for it; act in such a Manner, as to shew that you pray in earnest, and feel a Readiness to do what little you can in this Cause, even the' others, who might, if they pleased, very conveniently do a vast deal more, will do Nothing ?

fir. And, not to enlarge upon this copious Head, reflect once more, "bow your Affections fland, with Regard to this World, and another?"—Are you more deeply and practically convinced of the Vanity of these Things which are seen, and are Temporal (n)? Do you perceive your Expectations from them, and your Attachments to them, to diminish? You are willing to stay in this World, as long as your Father pleases; and it is right and well: But do you find your Bonds so loosened to in, that you are willing, heartily willing, to leave it at the shortest Warning; so that if God should see fit to summon you away on a sudden, tho' it should be in the Midst of your Enjoyments, Pursuits, Expectations, and Hopes, you would cordially consent to that remove; without faying, "Lord, let me stay a little while longer, to en-

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" joy this or that agreeable Entertainment, to finish this " or that Scheme ?" Can you think with an habitual Calmness and hearty Approbation, if such be the divine Pleafore of waking no more when you lie down on your Bed, of returning Home no more when you go out of your House? And yet, on the other Hand, how great sever the Burthens of Life are, do you find a Willingness to bear them, in Submission to the Will of your Heavenly Father, tho' it should be to many future Years; and the' trey should be Years of far greater Affliction, than you have ever yet feen? Can you fay calmly and steadily, if not with such Overslowings of tender Affections as you could defire, " Behold, thy Servant, thy " Child, is in Thine Hand, do with me as feemeth good in " thy Sight (o)! My Will is melted into Thine; to be " lifted up or laid down, to be carried out or brought " in, to be here or there, in this or that Circumstance, " just as Thou pleasest, and as shall best suit with Thy " great extensive Plan, which it is impossible that I, or " all the Angels in Heaven, should mend."

§ 12. These, if I understand Matters aright, are some of the most substantial Evidences of Growth and Establishment in Religion. Search after them: Bless God for them, so far as you discover them in yourself; and study to advance in them daily, under the Instuences of Divine Grace, to which I heartily recommend you, and to which I intreat you frequently to recommend yourself. The Christian breathing earnestly after Growth in

Grace.

Thou ever blessed Fountain of Natural and "Spiritual Life! I thank Thee, that I live, and know the Exercises and Pieasures of a Religious Life. I bless Thee, that thou hast insused into me Thine own vital Breath, tho' I was once dead in Trespasses and Sins (p); so that I am become, in a Sense peculiar to Thine own Children, a living Soul (q). But it is mine earnest Desire, that I may not only live, but grow; grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (r), upon an Acquaintance with whom my Progress in it so evidently depends! In this View I humbly intreat Thee, that

) 2 Sam. xv. 26. (p) Eph, ii. 2. (q) Gen. ii. 7. (r) 2 Pet. iii. 18.

The Christian breathing earnestly, &c., Chap. 26. "Thou wilt form my Mind to right Notions in Re-" ligion, that I may not judge of Grace by any wrong " Conceptions of it, nor measure my Advances in it " by these Things, which are merely the Effects of " Nature, and possibly its corrupt Esfects! " May I be feeking after an Increase of Divine Love " to Thee, my God and Father in Christ, of unreserved " Refignation to Thy wife and holy Will, and of ex-" tenfive Benevolence to my Fellow Creatures! May I " grow in Patience and Fortitude of Soul, in Humility " and Zeal; in Spirituality and a Heavenly Disposition of Mind, and in a Concern, that whether present or " absent, I may be accepted of the Lord (s), that whether I " live or die it may be for his Glory! In a Word, as thou " knowest I bunger and thirst after Righteousness, make me " whatever Thou wouldst delight to lee me! Draw on my " Soul, by the gentle Influences of Thy gracious SPIRIT, " every Trace and every Feature, which Thine Eye, " O Heavenly Father, may furvey with Pleasure, and " which Thou mayest acknowledge as Thine own Image. "I am sensible, O Lord, I have not as yet attained: " Yea, my Soul is utterly confounded to think, bow far "I am from being already perfect : But this one Thing, (after the great Example of Thine Apostle, and the " much greater of His Lord) I would endeavour to do; forgetting the Things which are behind, I would press " forward to those which are before (t). O that Thou " wouldst feed my Soul by Thy Word and Spirit! Having been, as I humbly hepe and trust, regenerated by " it, being born again, not of corruptible Seed, but of Incorruptible, even by Thy Word which liveth and abideth " for ever (u); as a new born Babe I defire the fincere Milk of the Word, that I may grow thereby (x). And may " my profiting appear unto all Men (y), till at length I come unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ (z); and after having enjoyed " the Pleasures of those that flourish eminently in Thy · Courts below, be fixed in the Paradise above ! I alk " and hope it thro' Him, of whose Fulness we have all " received, even Grace for Grace (a) : To Him be Glory's " both now and for ever (b)! Amen."
(5) 2 Cor. v. 9. (1; Phil. iii. 12, 13. (u) 1 Pet. i. 23. (x) 1 Pet. ii. 2.

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(s) 2 Cor. v. 9. (t; Phil. iii. 12, 13. (u) 1 Pet. i. 23. (x) 1 Pet. ii. 28. (y) 1 Tim. iv. 15. (z) Eph. iv. 13. (a) John i. 16. (b) 2 Pet. iii. 18.

CHAP XXVII.

The advanced Christian reminded of the Mercies of God, and exhorted to the Exercises of habitual Love to Him, and Joy in Him.

As holy Joy in GOD, our Privilege, as well as our Duty §. 1. The Christian invited to the Exercise of it; §. 2 (1) By the Representation of Temporal Mercies. §. 3. (2.) By the Consideration of Spiritual Favours. §. 4. (3.) By the Views of Eternal Happiness. §. 5. And, (4) Of the Mercies of GOD to others, the Living, and the Dead, §. 6. The Chapter closes with an Exhortation to this Heavenly Exercise, § 7. and with an Example of the genuine Workings of this grateful Joy in GOD.

1. I WOULD now suppose my Reader to find, on an Examination of his Spiritual State, that beis growing in Grace. And if you defire, that this Growth may at once be acknowledged and promoted, let me call your Soul to that more affectionate Exercise of Love to GOD, and Joy in Him, which fuits and threngthens, and exalts the Character of the advanced Christian; and which I befeech you to regard, not only as your Privilege, but as your Duty too. Love is the most sublime generous Principle, of all true and acceptable Obedience; and with Love, when so wisely and happily fixed, when so certainly returned, Joy, proportionable loy, must naturally be connected. It may justly grieve a Man that enters into the Spirit of Christianity, to fee how low a Life even the Generality of fincere Christians commonly live in this Respect. Rejoice then in the Lordi

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Lord, ye Righteous, and give Thanks at the Remembrance of his Holiness (a), and of all those other Perfections and Glories, which are included in that majestick, that wonderful, that delightful Name, The Lord Thy God! Spend not your facred Moments merely in Confession, or in Petition. tho' each must have their daily Share; But give a Part, a considerable Part, to the Celestial and Angelick Work of Praise. Yea, labour to carry about with you continually an Heart overslowing with such Sentiments, warmed and inflamed with such Affections.

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§. 2. Are there not continually Rays enough diffused from the great Father of Light and Love, to enkindle it in our Bosom? Come, my Christian Friend, and Brother, come and survey with me the goodness of our Heavenly Father. And Oh that He would give me such a Sense of it, that I might represent it in a suitable Manner; that while I am musing, the Fire may burn in my own Heart (b), and be communicated to years! And Oh that it might pass with the Lines I write, from Soul to Soul; awakening in the Breast of every christian that reads them. Sentiments more worthy of the Children of God, and the Leirs of Giory; who are to spend an Eternity in those sacred Exercises, to which I

am now endeavouring to excite you!

6. 3. HAVE you not Region to adopt the Words of David, and tay, How many are Thy gracious Thought unto me. O Lord! how great is the Sum of them! Who I would count them, they are more in Namber than the Sand (c). You Indeed know, where to begin the Survey; for the Favours of Con to you begun with your Being. Commemorate it therefore with a grateful heart, that the Eyes which faw your Subfiance, being yet imperfect, beheld you with a Friendly Care, when you were made in Secret, and have watched over you ever fince ; and that the Hand, which drew the Pian of your Members, what as yet there were none of them (d), not only fashioned them at first, but from that Time has been concerned in high ing all your Bones, to that not one of them is broken (e): Ind that indeed, it is to this you owe it, that you little Lock back upon the Path you have the De

⁽a) Pfal. xcvii. 12. (b) Pfal. x x xi x . 3. (c) Pfal. cx xxix, 17,1 (d) Pfal. ex xxix. 15, 16. (c) Pfal. xxiv. 2c.

Chap. 27. The Christian urged to the Exercise of it 271 that God brought you out of the Womb, and fay, whether you do not (as it were) fee all the Road thick fet with the Marks and Memorials of the Divine Goodness. Recollect the Places where you have lived, and the Persons with whom you have most intimately conversed; and call to Mind the Mercies you have received in those Places, and from those Persons, as the Instruments of the Divine Care and Goodness. Recollect the Difficulties and Dangers, with which you have been furrounded; and reflect attentively on what God hath done to defend you from them, or to carry you through them. Think how often there has been but a Step between you and Death; and how suddenly God hath sometimes interposed to set you in Safety, even before you apprehended your Danger. Think of those Chambers of Illness, in which you have been confined, and from whence perhaps you once thought you should go forth no more; but faid, with Hezekiah in the cutting off of your Days, I shall go to the Gates of the Grave, I am deprived of the Residue of my Years (f). God has, it may be, since that Time, added many Years to your Life; and you know not how many may be in referve, or how much Usefulness and Happiness may attend each. Survey your Circumstances in Relative Life; how many kind Friends are furrounding you daily, and studying how they may contribute to your Comfort. Reflect on those remarkable Circumstances in Providence, which occafioned the knitting of some Bonds of this Kind, which next to those which join your Soul to God, you number among the happielt. And forget not, in how many Inflances, when these dear Lives have been threatened, Lives perhaps more fensibly dear than your own, God hath given them back from the Borders of the Grave, and to added new Endearments arising from that tender Circum. kance, to all your After-Converse with them. Nor forget, in how gracious a Manner He hath supported some others in their last Moments, and enabled them to leave behind a sweet Odour of Piety, which hath embalmed their Memories, revived you when ready to faint under the Sorrows of the first Separation, and on the whole, nade even the Recollection of their Death delightful. 9. 4. Bur

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6. 4. Bur it is more than Time, that I lead on your Thoughts to the many Spiritual Mercies which God hath bestowed upon you. Look back, as it were, to the Ro.k. from whence you were bewn, and to the Hole of the Pit from whence you were digged (g). Reflect fericully on the State, wherein Divine Gace found you: Under how much Guilt, under how much Pollution! In what Danger, in what Ruin! Think what was, and Oh think with yet deeper Reflection, what would have been the Case! The Eye of Goo, which penetrates in o Eternity, faw what your Mind, amused with the Trifles of present Time and sensual Gratification, was utterly ignorant and regardless of: It saw you on the Borders of Eternity, and pitied you; faw, that you would in a little Time have been such a helpless, wretchec Crea uie, as the Sinner that is just now dead, and has to his infinite Surprize and everlasting Terror met his u.expected Doom, and would like him thand I hunder thruck in Astonishment and Despair. This Ged law, and Ho pitied you! and being merciful to you, He provided in the Countels of His eternal Love and Grace a Kedeemer for you, and purchased you to himlest with the Blood of bis Son: A Price, which it you will paute upon it, and think fericusly what it was, must jurely aff ct you to fuch a Degree, as to make you fall down before God in Wonder and Shame, to think that it flou dever have been given for you. To accomplish these blessed Porpoles, He len' bis Grace into your Heart; fo that the' you were once Darkness, you a e new Light in the Lord (h). He nade that happy Change which you now feel in your Soul, and by his Holy Spirit which is given to you, He flea abroad that Principle of Love (i), which is inkindled by this Review, and now flames with greater Ardour than before. Thus far he hath supported you in your Christian Course; and bacing obtained Help from Eim it is, that you continue even to this Day (k). He hath not only bleffea you but made you a Bleffing (1) : And tho' you have not been so nsetul, as that holy Generosty of l'eart which He has excited, would have engaged jour to desire; yet some Good you have done in the Station

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⁽k) Acis xxvi., 22.

⁽h) Eph. v. 8.

⁽i) Rom. v. 5

which he has fixed you. Some of your Brethren of Mankind have been relieved, perhaps too some thought-less Creature reclaimed to Virtue and Happiness by his Blessing on your Endeavours. Some in the Way to Heaven, are ptaising God for you; and some perhaps already there, are longing for your Arrival, that they may thank you in nobler and more expressive Forms for Benefits, the importance of which they now sufficiently understand, tho' while here they could never conceive it.

6. 5. CHRISTIAN, look round en the numberless Bleffings of one Kind, and of another, with which you are already encompossed; and advance your Prospect still farther, to what Faith yet discovers within the Veil. Think of hofe now unknown Transports with which thou shalt drop every Burtnen in the Grave, and thine immortal Spirit shall mount, light and joyful, holy and happy, to God, its Original, its Support, and its Hope; to God, the Source of Being, of Holineis, and of Piea. fure; to Jusus, thro' whom all these Blessings are derived to thee, and who will appoint thee a Throne near his own, to be for ever the Spectator and Partaker of his Giory. Think of the Rapture with which thou shalt attend this Triumph in the Resurrection Day, and receive this poor mouldering corruptible Body transformed into his glorious Image; and then think, " These Hopes are not mine alone, but the Hopes of "Thousands and Millions. Malticudes, " number among the dearest of my Friends upon the " Earth, are rejoicing with me in these Apprehensions " and Views: And God gives me fometimes to fee the " Smiles on their Cheeks, the sweet humble Hope that " sparkles in their Eyes, and thines thro' the Tears of " tender Gratitude ; and to near that little of their in-" ward Complacency and Joy, which Language can " express. Yea, and Multitudes more, who were once " equally dear to me with those, tho' I have laid them in " the Grave, and wept over their Dutt, are living to " GOD, living in the Possession of inconceivable De-" lights, and drinking large Draughts of the Water of Life, " which flows in perpetual Streams at his Right Hand." §. 6. O CHRISTIAN, thou art still intimately united

and allied to them. Death cannot break a friendship

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274 He Should look for ward to an Eternal State. Chap. 27. thus cemented, and it ought not to render thee insensible of the Happiness of those Friends, for whose Memory thou retainedst so just an Honour. They live to GOD, and his Servants; they ferve bim, and fee bis Face (m); and they make but a small Part of that glorious Assem. bly. Millions equally worthy of thine Esteem and affection with themselves, inhabit those blissful Regions: And wilt thou not rejoice in their Joy? and wilt thou not adore that everlatting Spring of Holiness and Happinels, from whence each of these Streams is derived? Yea, I will add, while the bleffed Angels are so kindly regarding us, while they are ministering to thee, O'Christian, and bearing thee in their Arms, as an Heir of Salvation (n), wilt thou not rejoice in their Felicity too? And wilt thou not adore that God who gives them all the superior Glory of their more exalted Nature, and gives them a Heaven, which fills them with Bleffedness, even while they feem to withdraw from it, that they may attend on Thee?

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6. 7. This, and infinitely more than this, the Bleffed God is, and was, and shall ever be. The Felicities of the bleffed Spirits that furround his Throne, and thy Felicities, O Christian, are immortal. These Heavenly Luminaries shall glow with an undecaying Flame, and thou shalt shine and burn among them, when the Sun and the Stars are gone out. Still shall the unchanging Father of Lights pour forth his Beams upon them; and the Luttre they reflect from him, and their Happinels in him, shall be everlasting, shall be ever growing. Bow down, O thou Chi'd of Goo, thou Heir of Glory, bow down, and let all that is within thee unite in one Ad of grateful Love; and let all that is around thee, all that is before thee in the Prospects of an unbounded Eternity, concur to elevate and transport thy Soul; that thou mayest, as far as possible, begin the Work and Bleffedness of Heaven, in falling down before the God of it, in opening thine Heart to his gracious Influences, and in breathing out before him that Incense of Praile, which these warm Beams of his Presence and Love have fo great a Tendency to produce, and to ennoble with a Fragrancy resembling that of his Paradise above. The

The grateful Soul rejoicing in the Bleffings of Providence and Grace, and pouring out it self before GOD in vigorous and affectionate Exercises of Love and Praise.

My God, it is enough! I have mufed, and the " Fire burneth (o)! But Oh, in what Language " shall the Flame break forth. What can I say but this, " that my Heart admires Thee, and adores Thee, and loves Thee! My little Vessel is as full as it can hold; " and I would pour out all that Fulness before Thee, " that it may grow capable of receiving more and more. "Thou art my Hope, and my Help; my Glory, and the " Lifter up of my Heart (p). My Heart rejoiceth in Thy " Salvation (q); and when I fet myfelf under the In-" fluences of Thy good Spirit, to converse with Thee, " a Thousand delightful Thoughts spring up at once; " a Thousand Sources of Pleasure are unsealed; and " flow in upon my Soul with fuch Refreshment and Jov, that they feem to crowd into every Moment the " Happinels of Days, and Weeks and Months. " I bless Thee, O Goo, for this Soul of mine, which

"Thou hast created; which Thou halt taught to fay,

" and I hope to the happiest Purpose, Where is GOD " my Maker (r) ! I bless Thee for the Knowledge, with

" which Thou hast adorned it. I bless Thee for that

" Grace, with which, I truft I may (not without hum-" ble Wonder) fay, Thou hast fanctified it ; tho' alas,

" the Celeffial Plant is fixed in too barren a Soil, and

" does not flourish to the Degree I could wish.

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" I bless Thee also for that Body which Thou hast " given me, and which Thou preservest as yet in its " Strength and Vigour ; not only capable of relishing " the Entertainments which Thou providest for its va-" rious Senles, but (which I esteem far more valuable " than any of them for its own Sake,) capable of aet-" ing with some Vivacity in Thy Service. I bless " Thee for that Ease and Freedom. with which these " Limbs of mine move themselves, and obey the Dic-" tates of my Spirit, I hope as guided by Thine. I blefs " Thee,

(a) Pfal. xxxix. 3. (p) Pial, iii. 3. (4) Pial. xiii. 5. (1) Job XXXV. 10.

An Example of the genuine Workings Chap. 27: "Thee, that the Keepers of thy House do not yet tremble, " nor the Strong Men bow themselves; that they that look ent of the Windows are not yet darkened, nor the " Daughters of Mufick brought low : I blefs Thee, O " God of my Life, that the Silver Cords are not yet " locfed, not the Golden Bowl broken (s): For it is Thine " Hand that braces all my Nerves, and Thine infinite "Skill that prepares those Spirits, which flow in so " freely, and when exhausted, recruit so soon and so of plentifully. " I praise Thee for that Royal Bounty, with which "Thou providest for the daily Support of Mankind in " general, and for mine in particular; for the various " Table which Thou spreadest before me, and for the over flowing Cup which Thou puttest into my Hands (t). " I bleis Thee, that these Bounties of Thy Providence do not serve, as it were, to upbraid a disabled Appetite, and are not like Meffes of Meat fet before the Dead. "I bless Thee too that I eat not my Morfel alone (u), " but share it with so many agreeable Friends, who add " the Relish of a social Life, to that of the Animal, at " our Seasons of common Repast. I thank Thee for " fo many dear Relatives at Home, for fo many kind " Friends abroad, who are capable of ferving me in " various Instances, and disposed to make an obliging " Ule of that Capacity. " Nor would I forget to acknowledge Thy Favour, " in rendering me capable of ferwing others, and giving er me in any Instances to know, how much more bleffed es it is to give than to receive (x). I thank Thee for a " Heart which feels the Sorrows of the Necessitions, " and a Mind which can make it my early Care and "Refreshment to contrive, according to my little Abi-" lity, for their Relief: For this also cometh forth from " Thee, O Land (y), the great Author of every bene-" volent Inclination, of every prudent Scheme, of every " successful Attempt to spread Happiness around us, or in any Instance to lessen Diffress. " And furely, O Lord, if I thus acknowledge the " Pleatures of Sympathy with the Afflicted, much more (t) Pfal. xxiii. 5. (u) Job. xxx1. 17. (q) Eccl, xii. 3, 4, 6.

(y) Ifat. xxviii. 29.

(x) Acts xx. 35.

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" must I bless Thee for the of Sympathy with the Happy, " with those that are compleatly Blessed. I adore Thee " for the Streams that water Paradile, and maintain it " in ever-flourishing, ever-growing Delight. I praise " Thee for the Reft, the Joy, the Transport, thou art " giving to many that were once dear to me on Earth; " whose Sorrows it was my Labours to sooth, and whose " Joys, especially in Thee, it was the Delight of my " Heart to promote. I praise Thee for the Blessedness " of every Saint, and of every Angel, that furrounds "Thy Throne above; and I praise I'hee with Accents " of distinguished Pleasure, for that reviving Hope which Thou hast implanted in my Bosom, that I " shall, ere long, know by clear Sight, and by ever-" lasting Experience, what that Felicity of theirs is, " which I now only discover at a Distance, thro' the " comparatively obscure Glass of Faith. Even now, " thro' Thy Grace do I feel myself borne forward by " Thy supporting Arm to those Regions of Blessedness. " Even now, am I waiting for Thy Salvation (Z), with " that ardent Defire on the one Hand, which its sub-" lime Greatness cannot but inspire into the believing " Soul, and that calm Refignation on the other, waich " the immutability of Thy Promise establishes.

"And now, O my God, What shall I say unto Thee! What, but that I love Thee above all the Powers of Language to express! That I love Thee for what "Thou art to Thy Creatures, who are in their various Forms, every Moment deriving Being, Knowledge and Happiness from Thee, in Numbers and Degrees, far beyond what my narrow Imagination can conceive. But O I adore and love Thee, yet far more, for what Thou art in Toyself; for those Stores of Pertection which Creation has not diminished, and which can never be exhausted by all the Effects of it which

"Thou impartest to Thy Creatures; that infinite Perfection which makes Thee Thine own Happiness, "Thine own End; amiable, infinitely amiable and

"venerable, were all derived Excellence and Happi-

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178 An Example of the genuine Workings, &c. Chap. 27 " O Thou first, Thou greatest, Thou fairest of all " Objects! Thou only great, Thou only fair, possess " all my Soul ! And furely Thou doft poffes it. While " I thus feel Thy facred Spirit breathing on my Heart, " and exciting these Fervours of Love to Thee, I can-" not doubt it any more, than I can doubt the Reality " of this Animal Life, while I exert the Actings of it, " and feel its Sensations. Surely if ever I knew the " Appetite of Hunger, my Soul hungers after Righteous-" ne/s (a), and longs for a greater Conformity to Thy "Biessed Nature and Holy Will. If ever my Palate " felt Thirst, my Soul thirsteth for GOD, even for the " living GOD (b), and panteth for the more abundant " Communication of His Favour. If ever this Body, " when wearied with Labours or Journies, knew what " it was to wish for the Refreshment of my Bed and rejoice to rest there, my Soul with sweet Acquiescence " rests upon Thy gracious Bosom, O my Heavenly Fa-" ther, and returns to its Repose in the Embraces of its "God, who bath dealt so bountifully with it (c). And " if ever I saw the Face of a beloved Friend with Com-" placency and Joy, I rejoice in beholding Thy Face, " O Lord, and a calling Thee my Father in Christ. " Such Thou art, and fuch Thou wilt be, for Time and for Eternity, What have I more to do, but to " commit myself to Thee for both? Leaving it to "Thee to chuse my Inberitance, and to order my Affairs for me (d), while all my Business is to serve Thee, and all my Delight to praise Thee. My Soul follows bard after GOD, because His Right Hand upholds me " (e). Let it fill bear me up, and I shall press on towards Thee, till all my Defires be accomplished in " the E:ernal Enjoyment of Thee! Amen."

(a) Mett. v. 6.

(b) Pfal. xlii. 2.

(c) Pfal. cxvi. 7.

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(d) Ffal. xivii. 4. (e) Pfal. ixiii. 8.

CHAP. XXVIII.

The Established Christian urged to exert himself for Purposes of Usefulness.

A fincers Love to GOD will express itself, not only in Dewotion, but in Benevolence to Men. §. 1, 2. This is
the Command of GOD, §. 3. The true Christian feels
his Soul wrought to a Holy Conformity to it: §. 4. And
therefore will desire Instructions on this Head. § 5.
Accordingly Directions are given for the Improvement
of various Talents: Particularly, (1) Genius and
Learning, § 6. (2.) Power. §. 7. (3) Doniestick
Authority. §. 8. (4.) Esteem. §. 9. (5) Riches, §. 10.
Several good Ways of employing them binted at. §. 11.
Prudence in Expence urged, for the Support of Charity.
§. 12, 13. Divine Direction in this Respect to be
jought, §. 14. The Christian breathing after more extensive Usefulness.

S. 1. SUCH as I have described in the former Chapter, I trust, are and will be the frequent Exercises of your Soul before God. Thus will your Love and Gratitude breathe itself forth in the Divine Presence, and will, thro' Jesus the great Mediator, come up before it as Incense, and yield an acceptable Savour. But then you must remember, this will not be the only Essent of that Love to God, which I have supposed so warm in your Heart. It is be sincere, it will not spend itself in Words alone; but will discover itself in Actions, and will produce, as its genuine Fruit, an unseigned Love to your Fellow Creatures, and an unwearied Desire and Labour to do them Good continually.

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fay, "looked upon me with so gracious an Eye, has "He not only forgiven me Ten Thousand Offences, but enriched me with such a variety of Benefits! Oh what shall I render to Him for them all! Instruct me, Oh ye Oracles of Eternal Truth! Instruct me, ye elder Brethren in the Family of my Heavenly Father! Instruct me above all, O thou Spirit of Wisdom and of Love, what I may be able to do, to express my Love to the Eternal Fountain of Love, and to approve my Fidelity to Him, who has alteredy done so much to engage it, and who will take so much Pleasure in owning and rewarding it!"

§. 3. This, O Christian, is the Command which we have heard from the Beginning, and it will ever continue in unimpaired Force, that he who loveth GOD, should Love his Brother also (a); and should express that Love, not in Word and in Profession alone, but in Deed and in Truth (b). You are to love your Neighbour as sourself; to love the whole Creation of GOD; and, to far as your Influence can extend, must endeavour to make it happy.

§ 4. "YES," you will fay, and I do love it. I feel the golden Chain of Divine Love incircling us all, and binding us close to each other, joining us in one Body, and diffusing (as it were) one Soul thro' all. May Happiness, true and sublime, perpetual and evergrowing Happiness, reign thro the whole World of Gon's rational and obedient Creatures in Heaven and on Earth! and may every revolted Creature, that is capable of being recovered and restored, be made obedient! Yea, may the necessary Punishment of those, who are irrecoverable, be over-ruled by Infinite

Wisdom and Love to the Good of the Whole!"

§ 5. These are right Sentiments; and if they were indeed the Sentiments of your Heart, O Reader, and not an empty Form of vain Words, they will be attended with a serious Concern to act in Subordination to this great Scheme of Divine Providence, according to your Abilities in their utmost Extent. And to this Purpose, they will put you on surveying the peculiar Circumstances of your Life and Being; that you may discover

Chap. 28. and all the Power he has, to this End. what Opportunities of Usefulness they now afford, and how those Opportunities and Capacities may be im-proved. Enter therefore into such a Survey; not that you may pride yourself in the Diffinctions of Divine Providence or Grace towards you, or baving received, may glory as if you had not received (c); but that you may deal faithfully with the great Proprietor, whose Steward you are, and by whom you are intrusted with every Talent, which, with Respect to any Claim from your Fellow-Creatures, you may call your own. And here, having Gifts differing according to the Grace that is given to us (d), let us hold the Balance with an impartial Hand, that fo we may determine what it is that God requires of us; which is nothing less, than doing the most we can invent, contrive and effect, for the general Good. But, Oh how feldom is this Estimate faithfully made! And how much does the World around us, and how much does our own Souls suffer, for Want of that Fidelity!

§. 6. HATH God given you Genius and Learning? It was not, that you might amuse or deck yourself with it, and kindle a Blaze which should only serve to attract and dazzle the Eyes of Men. It was intended, to be the Means of leading both yourself and them to the Father of Lights. And it will be your Duty, according to the peculiar Turn of that Genius and Capacity, either to endeavour to improve and adorn Human Life, or, by a more direct Application of it to Divine Subjects to plead the Cause of Religion, to defend its Truths, to enforce and recommend its Practice, to deter Men from Courses which would be dishonourable to God and satal to themselves, and to try the utmost Efforts of all the Solemnity and Tenderness with which you can clothe your Addresses, to lead them into the

Paths of Virtue and Happiness.

§. 7. Has God invested you with Power, whether it be in a larger or finaller Society? Remember that this Power was given you, that God might be honoured, and those placed under your Government whether Domestick or Publick might be made happy. Be concerned therefore, that whether you be intrusted with the Rod,

The Reputation be bas in the World, Chap 28. or the Sword, it may not be borne in wair (e). Are you a Magistrate? Have you any Share in the great and tremendous Charge of enalling Laws; Reverence the Authority of the Supreme Legislator, the great Guarcian of Society: Promote none, consent to none, which you do not in your own Conscience esteem, in present Circumstances, an Intimation of his Will; and in the Establish. ment of which you do not firmly believe you shall be b's Minister for Good (f). Have you the Charge of executing Laws? Put Life into them by a vigorous and strengous Execution, according to the Nature of the particular Office you bear. Retain not an empty Name of Authority. Permit not yourfelf, as it were, to fall asleep on the Tribunal. Be active, be wakeful, be obfervant of what paffeth around you. Protect the Upright, and the Innocent. Break in Pieces the Power of the Op ressor. Unveil every dishonest Heart. Disgrace, as well as defeat the Wreich, that makes his distinguished Abilities the Disguise or Protection of the Wickedness, which he ought rather to endeavour to expose, and to drive out of the World with Abhorrence.

§. 8. ARE you placed only at the Head of a private Family? Rule it for GOD. Administer the Concerns of that little Kingdom with the same Views, and on the fame Principles, which I have been inculcating on the Powerful and the Great; if by an unexpected Accident any of them should suffer their Eye to glance upon the Passage above. Your Children and Servants are your natural Subjects. Let good Order be established among them, and keep them under a regular Discipline. Let them be instructed in the Principles of Religion, that they may know how reasonable such a Discipline is; and let them be accustomed to act accordingly. You cannot indeed change their Hearts, but you may very much influence their Conduct; and by that Means may preferve them from many Snares, may do a great deal to make them good Members of Society, and may fet them as it were in the Way of GOD's Steps (g), if peradventure passing by He may bless them with the Riches of his Grace. And fail not to do your utmost to convince them of their Need of those Blessings; labour to

Chap. 28. and Esteem amongst bis Fellow Creatures. 283 engage them to an high Esteem of them, and to an earnest Desire of them, as incomparably more valuable

than any Thing elfe.

6. 9. Again, Has God been pleafed to raife you to Efteem among your Fellow-Creatures, which is not always in proportion to a Man's Rank or Pollestion in Human Life? Are your Counfels heard with Attention? Is your Company fought? Does Gon give you good Acceptance in the Eyes of Men, fo that they do not only put the fairest Construction on your Words, but overlook Faults of which you are conscious to yourself, and confider your Actions and Performances in the most indulgent and favourable Light? You ought to regard this, not only as a Favour of Providence, and as an Encouragement to you chearfully to pursue your Duty, in the several Branches of it, for the Time to come; but alfo, as giving you much greater Opportunities of Utefulness, than in your present Station you could otherwife have had. If your Character has any Weight in the World, throw it into the right Scale. Endeavour to keep Virtue and Goodness in Countenance. Affectionately give your Hand to modest Worth, where it feems to be depressed or overlooked; tho' shining, when viewed in its proper Light, with a Lustre which you may think much superior to your own. Be an Advocate for Truth; be a Counsellor of Peace; be an Example of Candour; and do all you can to reconcile the Hearts of Men, and especially of good Men, to each other, however they may differ in their Opinions about Matters which it is possible for Good Men to difpute. And let the Caution and Humility of your Behaviour in Circumstances of such superior Eminence, and amidit fo many Tokens of general Esteem, friently reprove the Rashness and Haughtiness of those, who perhaps are remarkable for little elfe : or who, it their Abilities were indeed considerable, must be despited, and whose l'alents must be in a great Measure lost to the Publick, till that Ralaness and Haughtiness of Spirit be subdued. Nor suffer yourselt to be interrupted in the generous and worthy Course, by the little attacks of Envy and Calumny, which you may meet with in it. Be still attentive to the general Good, and steadily reiolute

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solute in your Efforts to promote it; and leave it to Providence, to guard or to rescue your Character from the bale Assults of Malice and Falsehood; which will often without your Labour, confute themselves, and heap upon the Authors greater Shame, or if they are inaccessible to that,) greater Infamy, than your Hu-

manity will allow you to wish them.

§. 10 ONCE more, Has Gon bleft you with Riches? Has he placed you in fuch Circumstances, that you have more than you absolutely need for the Subfillence of yourfelt and your family? Remember your approaching Account. Remember what an Incumbrance these Things often prove to Men in the Way of their Salvation, and how often, according to our Loid's express Declaration, they render it as difficult to enter into the Kingdom of GOD, as it is for a Camel to go thro' the Eve of a Needle (h). Let it therefore be your immediate, your earnest, and your daily Prayer, that Riches may not be a Snare and a Shame to you, as they are to by far the greater Part of their Poffeffors. Appropriate, I befeech you, some certain Part and Proportion of your Estate and Revenues, to charitable Uses; with a provisional Increase, as GOD shall prosper you, in any extraordinary Inflance. By this Means you will always have a Fund of Charity at hand: And you will probably be more ready to communicate, when you look upon what is so deposited, as not in any Sense your own; but as already actually given away to those Uses, tho' not yet affixed to particular Objects. It is not for me to fay, what that Proportion cught to be. To those who have large Revenues, and no Children, perhaps a Third or one Half may be too little: To those whose Incomes are imall, and their Charge confiderable, tho' they have fomething more than is obsolutely necessary, it is polfible a Tenth may be too much. But pray, that God would guide your Mind; make a Trial for one Year, on such I erms, as in your Conscience you think will be most pleasing to Him; and ler your Observations on that, teach you to fix your Proportion for the next; always remembering, that He requires Justice in the first Place, and A'ms-deeds only fo far as may confift with

Chap. 28. Riches may be usefully employed.

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that. Yet at the same Time take heed of that treacherous, delusive, and in many Instances destructive Imagination, "that Judice to your own Family requires "that you should leave your Children wery rich;" which has perhaps cost some parsimonious Parents the Lives of those Darlings for whom they laid up the Portion of the Poor; and what satal Consequences of D vine Displeasure may attend it to those that yet survive God only knows; and I heartily pray, that you or yours

may never learn by Experience.

§ 11. And that your Heart may yet be more opened, and that your Charity may be directed to the bett Purposes, let me briefly mencion a Variety of good Ujes, which may call for the Confideration of those, whom God has in this Respect distinguished by an Ability to do Good. To assist the Hints I am to offer, look round on the Neighbourhood in which you live. Think how many honest and industrious, perhaps too I might add religious People, are making very hard Shifts to It uggle thro' Life. Think what a Comfort that would be to them, which you might without any Inconvenience, spare from that Abundance which God hath given you. -Hearken also to any extraordinary Calls of Charity which may happen, especially those of a publick Nature; and help them forward with your Example, and your Interest, which perhaps may be of much greater Importance than the Sum which you contribute, confidered in itself .- Have a Tongue to plead for the Necessitous, as well as a Hand to relieve them; and endeavour to discountenance those poor shameful Excuses, which Covetousness often dictates to those, whose Art may indeed fer some Varnish on what they suggest, but so slight a one that the coarse Ground will appear thro' it. -- See how many poor Children are wandering naked and ignorant about the Street, and in the Way to all Kinds of Vice and Mifery; and confider what can be done, towards clothing some of them at least, and instructing them in the Principles of Religion. Would every thriving Family in a Town, which is able to afford Help on such Occasions, cast a pirying Eye on one poor Family in its Neighbourhood, and take it under their Patronage, to athil in feeding, and clothing, and teach-

(i) Píal. lxv. 4.

(k) Mark xii. 42, 43.

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6. 12. AND, that amidft fo many preffing Demands for Charity, you may be better furnished to answer them, feriously reflect on your Monner of Living. I say not, that Gob requires, you should become one of the many Poor, relieved out of your Income. The Support of Society, as at present established, will not only permit, but require, that some Persons should allow themselves in the Elegancies and Delights of Life; by farnishing which, Multitudes of poor Families are much more creditably and comfortably subsisted, with greater Advantage to themselves and Safety to the Publick, than they could be, if the Price of their Labours, or of the Commodities in which they deal, were to be given them as an Alms: Nor can I imagine it grateful to Goo, that his Gifts should be refused, as if they were meant for Snares and Curfes, rather than Benefits. This were to fruitrate the benevolent Purposes of the gracious Father of Mankind, and if carried to its Rigour would be a Sort of Conspiracy against the whole System of Nature. Let the Bounties of Providence be used; but let us carefully see to it, that it be in a moderate and prudent Manner, left, by our own Folly, that which should have been for our Welfare, become a Trap (1). Let Conscience fay, my dear Reader, with Regard to yourfelf, what Proportion of the good Things you possess, your Heavenly Father intends for your felf, and what for your Brethren; and live not as if you had no Brethren, as if pleafing yourfelf, in all the Magnificence and Luxury you can devise, were the End for which you were fent into the World. I fear this is the Excess of the present Age, and not an Excess of Rigour and Mortification. Examine therefore your Expences, and compare them with your Income. That may be shameful y extravagant in you, which may not only be pardonable, but commendable in another of superior Estate. Nor can you be fure that you do not exceed, merely because you do not plunge yourself in Debt, nor render yourself incapable of laying up any Thing for your Family. If you be disabled from doing any Thing for the Poor, or any Thing proportionable to your Rank in Life, by that genteel and elegant Way of Living which you affect,

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Chap. 28.

Gon must dis aprove of such a Conduct; and you ought, as you will answer it to him, to retrench it. And tho' the Divine Indulgence will undoubtedly be exercised to those in whom there is a sincere Principle of Faith in Chriff, and undiffembled Love to GOD and Man, the' it act not to that Heighth of Benificence and Ulefulness which might have been attained; vet be affured of this, that He who rendereth to every one according to His Works, will have a first Regard to the Degrees of the Goedness in the Distribution of final Rewards: 50 that every neglected Opportunity draws after it an irreparable Loss, which will go into Eternity along with you. And let me add too, that every Instance of Negligence indulged renders the Mind still more and more indolent and weak, and confequently more indisposed to recover the Ground which has been lott, or even to maintain that which has hitherto been kept.

Things upon you. I am only directing your Pleasures into a notler Channel; and indeed that Frugality which is the Source of such a Generosity, far from being at all injurious to your Reputation, will rather amongst Wise and Good Men, greatly promote it: But you have far nobler Motives before you, than those which arise from their Regards. I speak to you. as to a Child of GOD, and a Member of Christ; as joined therefore by the most intimate Union to all the Poorest of those that believe in him. I speak to you, as to an Heir of Eternal Glory, who ought therefore to have Sentiments great and sublime, in some Proportion to that expected Inheritance.

§. 14. Cast about therefore in your Thoughts, what Good is to be done, and what you can do, either in your own Person, or by your Interest with others; and go about it with Resolution, as in the Name and Presence of the Lord. And as the Lord giveth Wisdom, and out of his Mouth cometh Knowledge and Understanding (m), go to the Footstool of his Throne, and there seek that Guidance and that Grace which may suit your present Circumstances, and may be effectual to produce the Fruits of Holiness and Usefulness, to His more abundant Glory, and to the Honour of your Christian Profession.

The Established CHRISTIAN breathing after more extensive Usefulness.

Bountiful Father, and Sovereign Author of all " Good, whether Natural or Spiritual! I blefs " Thee for the various Talents, with which Thou hat " enriched fo undeserving a Creature, as I must ac-" knowledge myself to be. My Soul is in the deepest " Confusion before Thee, when I consider to how lit-" tle Purpose I have hitherto improved them. Alas! " what have I done, in proportion to what thou mightelt " reasonably have expected, with the Gifts of Nature " which Thou haft bestowed upon me, with my Capacities of Life, with my Time, with my Possessions, " with my Influence over others! Alas! thre' my own " Negligence and Folly, I look back on a barren Wil-" derneis, where I might have feen a fruitful Field, " and a springing Harvest! Justly do I indeed deserve " to be stripped of all, to be brought to an immediate " Account for all, to be condemned as in many Re-" fpeds unfaithful to Thee, and to the World, and to " my own Soul; and in Consequence of that Condem-" nation, to be cast into the Prison of Eternal Darkness! " But I hou, Lord, hast freely forgiven the dreadful Debt. " of Ten Thousand Talents. Adored be thy Name for its " Accept, O Lord, accept that renewed Surrender, " which I would now make of myfelf, and of all L " have, unto Thy Service! I acknowledge that it is of "Thine own that I give Thee (n). Make me, I befrech "Thee, a faithful Steward for my great Lord; and " may I think of no separate Interest of my own, in " Opposition to Thine ! " I adore Thee, O Thou God of all Grace, if

while I am thus speaking to Thee, I feel the Love of Thy Creatures ariting in my Soul; it I feel my Heart opening to embrace my Brethren of Mankind! Oh make me thy faithful Almoner, in distributing to them all that Thou hast looged in mine Hand for their Relief! And in determining what is my own Share, may I hold the Balance with an equal Hand, and

2 Cor. ix. 10.

CHAP. XXIX.

The CHRISTIAN rejoicing in the Views of Death and Judgment.

Death and Judgment are near; but the Christian bas Reason to welcome both: §. 1. Tet Nature recoils from the Solemnity of them. S. 2. An Attempt to reconcile the Mind, [1.] To the Prospect of Death . 3. From the Confideration, (1) Of the many Evils that furound us in this Mortal Life. § 4. (2.) Of the Remainder of Sin which we feel within us. S. c. And. (3.) Of the Happiness which is immediately to succeed Death & 6, 7. All which might make the Christian willing to die in the most agreeable Circum ances of Human Life. § 8 [11] The Christian has Reason to rejoice in the Prospect of Judgment. § 9. Since, how-His Honour, to difplay His Glory, and to triumph over His Enemies §. 10. as also to compleat the Happiness of every Believer. § 11. and of the while Church. §. 12, 13. The Matation of a Christian, whose Heart is warm with these Prospects.

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MEN the Visions of the Lord were closing upon John, the beloved Disciple, in the Island of Patmos, it is observable, that He who gave him that Revelation, even Jesus the Faithful and True Winess, concludes with those lively and important Words: He who testifieth these Things saith, Surely I came quickly: And John answers with the greatest Readiness and Pleasure, Amen, even so come Lord Jejus (a)! Come, as thou hast said, surely, and quickly!——And remem-

Death will end the Sorrows of Life, Chap 29. 202 remember, O Christian, whoever you are that are now reading these Words, your Divine Lord speaks in the fame Language to you : Bebeld I come gaickly. Yes, very quickly will he come by Death, to turn the Key, to open the Door of the Grave for thine Admittance taither, and to lead thee thro' it into the now unknown Regions of the Invilible World. Nor is it long before the Judge who flandeth at the Door (b), will appear also to the universal judgment: And tho' perhaps, not only Scores, but Hundreds of Years may lie between that Period and the present Moment, vet it is but a very fmall Point of Time to Him, who views at once all the unmeafurable Ages of a palt and fu ure Eternity. A I bouland Years are with Him but as one Day, and One Day as a Thoufand Years (c). In both thefe Senfes then does he com quickly: And I trult, you can answer with a glad Amen, that the Warning is not terrible, or unpleasant to your Ears; but rather, that His coming, His certain, His speedy Coming, is the Object of your delightful Hope, and of your longing Expectation.

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§. 2. I am fure, it is reasonable it should be so: And yet perhaps Nature, fond of Life, and unwilling to part with a long known Abode, to enter on a State to which it is entirely a Stranger, may recoil from the Thoughts of Dying; or struck with the awful Pomp of an expiring and dissolving World, may look on the Judgment-Day with some Mixture of Terror. And therefore my dear Brother in the Lord, (for as such I can now esteem you,) I would reason with you a little on this Head, and would intreat you to look more attentively on this solemn Object, which will, I trust, grow less disagreeable to you, as it is more familiarly viewed. Nay, I hope, that instead of starting back from it, you will rather spring

forward towards it with Joy and Delight.

6.3. THINK, O Christian, when Christ comes to call you away by Death, He comes—to set you at Liberty from your present Sorrows,—to deliver you from your Struggles with remaining Corruption,—and to receive you to dwell with himself in compleat Holiness and Joy. You shall be absent from the Body, and be present with the Lord (d).

(b) Jam. v. 9. (c) 2 Pet. iii. 8. (d) 2 Cor. v. 8.

8. 4. HE will indeed call you away from this World. But Oh, what is this World, that you should be fond of it, and cling to it with fo much Eagerness? How low are all those Enjoyments that are peculiar to it; and how many its vexations, its Snares and its Sorrows? Review your Pilgrimage thus far; and tho' you must acknowledge, that Goodness and Mercy have followed you all the days of your Life (e), yet has not that very Mercy itself planted some Thorns in your Paths, and given you some wise and necessary, yet painful Intimations, that this is not your Rest (f) ! Review the Monuments of your withered Joys, of your blafted Hopes; if there be yet any Monuments of them remaining more than a mournful Remembrance they have left behind in your afflicted Heart. Look upon the Graves, that have swallowed up many of your dearest and most amiable Friends, perhaps in the very Bloom of Life, and in the greatest Intimacy of your Converse with them; and reslect, that if you hold it out a few Years more, Death will renew its Conquests at your Expence, and devour the most precious of those that yet survive. View the Living, as well as the Dead: Behold the State of Human Nature, under the many grievous Marks of its Apostacy from Goo; and fay, whether a wife and good Man would wish to continue always here. Methinks were I myself secure from being reached by any of the Arrows that fly around me, I could not but mourn, to fee the Wounds that are given by them, and to hear the Groans of those that are continually falling under them. The Diseases and Calamities of Mankind are so many, and (which is most grievous of all) the Distempers of their Minds are so various, and so threatning, that the World appears almost like an Hospital: And a Man, whose Heart is tender, is ready to feel his Spirits broken, as he walks thro' it, and furveys the fad Scene; especially when he fees how little he can do for the Recovery of those whom he pities. Are you a Christian, and does t not pierce your Heart, to fee how Human Nature is unk, in Vice, and in Shame? to fee with what amazing ofolence some are making themselves open y vile; and low the Name of CHRIST is dishonoured by too many

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that call themselves His People? to see the unlawful Deeds and filthy Practices of them that live ungodly, and to behold, at the same Time, the Infirmities at least, and Irregularities of those, concerning whom we have better Hopes? And do you not wish to escape from such a World, where a righteous and compassionate Soul must be wexed from Day to Day by so many Spectacles

of Sin and M fery (g)?

6. c. YEA, to come nearer Home, do you not feel fomething within you, which you long to quit, and which would imbitter even Paradife itself? Something which, were it to continue, would grieve and distress you even in the Society of the Bleffed? Do you not feel a Remainder of Indwelling Sin; the fad Consequence of the Original Revolt of our Natue from Goo? Are you not struggling every Day with some Residue of Corruption, or at least M urning on Account of the Weakness of your Graces? Do you not often find your Spirits dull and languid, when you would defire to raise them to the greatest Fervour in the Service of Goo? Do you not find your Hearts too often insensible of the richest Instances of his Love, and your Hands teeble in his Service, even when to will is present with you (h)? Does not your Life in its best Days and Hurs, appear a low unprofitable Thing, when compared with what you are lentible it ought to be, and with what you with that it were? Are you not frequently, as it were, firetching the Pinions of the Mind, and faying, Ob that I had Wings like a Dove, that I might fly away and be at

that Jesus comes to deliver you from these Complaints? That he comes to answer your Wishes, and to fulfil the largest Desires of your Hearts, those Desires that he himself has inspired? That he comes to open upon you a World of Purity and Joy, of active, exalted, and

unwearied Services?

§. 7. O Christian, how often have you cast a longing Eye towards those happy Shores, and wished to pass the Sea, the boisterous, unpleasant, dangerous Sea, that separates you from them? When your Lord has

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Chap. 29. and the Day of Judgment be welcome. condescended to make you a short Visit in his Ordinances on Earth, how have you bleft the Time, and the Place, and pronounced it, amidit many other Difadvantages of Situation, to be the very Gate of Heaven (k)? And is it so delightful to behold this Gate, and will it not be much more so to enter into it? Is it so delightful to receive the Visits of Jesus for an Hour, and will it not be infinitely more so to dwell with him for ever? "Lord," may you well fay, "when I dwell with "Thee, I shall dwell in Holiness, for Thou Thyself " are Holiness; I shall dwell in Love, for Thou Thy-" felf art Love; I shall dwell in Joy, for Thou art the " Fountain of Joy, as Thou art in the Father, and the " Father in Thee (1)." Bid welcome to his Approach therefore, to take you at your Word, and to fulfil to you that Saying of His, on which your Soul has fo often rested with Heavenly Peace and Pleasure; Father. I will that they whom Thou haft given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory which Thou bast given me (m).

§. 8. SURELY you may fay in this View, "The fooner Christ comes, the better." What the the Residue of your Days be cut off in the Midst? What the you leave many expected Pleasures in Life untasted, and many Schemes unaccomplished? Is it not enough, that what is taken from a mortal Life shall be added to a glorious Eternity; and that you shall spend those Days and Years in the Presence and Service of Christ in Heaven, which you might otherwise have spent with him, and for him, in the impersect Enjoyments and Labours on Earth.

So go But your Prospects reach, not only beyond Death, but beyond the separate State. For with regard to his final Appearance to Judgment our Lord says, Sarely I come quickly, in the Sense illustrated before: And so it will appear to us, if we compare this Interval of Time with the blissful Eternity which is to succeed it; and probably, if we compare it with those Ages which have already passed, since the Sun began to measure out to Earth its Days and its Years. And will you not here also sing your Part in the joyful Anthem, Amen; even so come, Lord Jesus!

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(k) Gen. xxviii. 17. (l) John xvii. 21. (m) John xvii. 24.

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6. 10. IT is true, Christian, it is an awful Day; a Day, in which Nature shall be thrown into a Confusion as yet unknown. No Earthquake, no Eruption of burn. ing Mountains, no Defolation of Cities by devouring Flames, or of Countries by overflowing Rivers or Seas, can give any just Emblem of that dreadful Day; when the Heavens being on Fire shall be dissolved, as well as the Earth, and all that is therein shall be burnt up (n); when all Nature shall flee array in Amazement before the Face of the universal Judge (o), and there shall be a great Cry, far beyond what was known in the Land of Egypt, when there was not a House in which there was not one dead (p). Your Flesh may be ready to tremble at the View; yet your Spirit must surely rejoice in GOD your Saviour (q). You may justly say, "Let this illustrious " Day come, even with all its Horrors!" Yea, like the Christians described by the Apostle (r), you may be look. ing for, and hastening to that Day of terrible Brightness and universal Doom. For your Lord will then come, to vindicate the Justice of those Proceedings which have been in many Instances so much obscured, and because they have been obscured have been also blasphemed. will come, to difplay his Magnificence, descending from Heaven with a shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and with the Trump of GOD (s); taking his Seat upon a Throne infinitely exceeding that of earthly, or even of Celefial Princes, clothed with bis Father's Glory, and bis own (t); furrounded with a numberless Host of foining Attendants, when coming to be glorified in his Saint, and admired in all them that believe (u). His Enemies shall also be produced to grace his Triumph ; The Serpent shall be feen there rolling in the Dust, and trodden under Foot by him and by all his Servants: Those, who once condemned him, shall tremble at his Presence: and those who bowed the Knee before him in profant Mockery, shall in wild Despair call to the Mountains it fail upon them, and to the Rocks to hide them from the Fact of that Lamb of GOD (x), whom they once led away to the most inhuman Slaughter. §. 11. 0

⁽n) 2 Pet. iii. 10: 12. (o) Rev. xx. 11; (p) Exod. xii. 30. (q) Luke i. 47. (r) 2 Pet. iii. 12. (s) 1 Theff. iv. 16. (x) Rev. vi. 16.

&. 11. O Christian, does not your loyal Heart bound at the Thought? and are you not ready, even while you read thefe Lines, to begin the victorious Shout in which you are then to join? He jully expects that your Thoughts should be greatly elevated and impressed with the Views of bis Triumph; but at the same Time he permits you to remember your down personal Share in the Foy and Glory of that bleffed Day: And even now he has the View before Him, of what his Power and Love shall then accomplish for your Salvation. And what shall it not accomplish? He shall come, to break the Bars of the Grave, and to re-animate your fleeping Clay. Your Bodies must indeed be laid in the Dust, and be lodged there as a Testimony of Goo's Displeasure against Sin; against the first Sin that ever was committed, from the fad Confequences of which the dearest of his Children cannot be exempted. But you shall then have an Ear to hear the Voice of the Son of GOD, and an Eye to behold the Lustre of his Appearance; and shall shine forth like the Sun (y) arising in the clear Heaven, which is as a Bridegroom coming out of his Chamber (z). Your Soul shall be new dressed, to grace this high Solemnity; and be clothed not with the Rags of Mortality, but with the Robes of Glory; for he shall change this vile Body, to fashion it like his own glorious Body (a). And when you are thus royally arrayed, he shall confer publick Honours on you, and on all his People before the afsembled World. You may now perhaps be loaded with Infamy, called by reproachful Names, and charged with Crimes, or with Views which your very Soul abhors: But he will then bring forth your Righteousness as the Light (b), and your Saivation as a Lamp that burneth (c). Tho' you have been dishonoured by Men, you shall be acknowledged by GOD; and tho' treated as the Filth of the World, and the Off scouring of all Things (d), He will shew you that he regards you, as his Treasure, in the Day that he makes up his Jewels (e). When he shall put away all the Wicked of the Earth like Drofs (f), you shall be pronounced Righteous in that full Assembly; and tho 0 3 indeed

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⁽y) Matt. xiii. 43. b) Plal. xxxvii. 6.

⁽r) Mal. iii. 17.

⁽z) Pfal. xix. 6. (c) Ifai. lxii. 1.

⁽a) Phil. iii. 21. (d) 1 Cor. iv. 13.

⁽f) Plal. cxix. 119.

298 Shall fit on the Judgment-Seat with Christ, Ch. 29. indeed you have broken the Divine Law, and might in first Justice have been condemned, yet being clothed with the Righteousness of the great Redeemer, even that Righteousness which is of GOD by Faith (g), Justice itself shall acquit you, and join with Mercy in bestowing upon you a Crown of Life (h). CHRIST will confess you before Men and Angels, (i), will pronounce you good and faithful Servants, and call you to enter into the Joy of your Lord (k): He will speak of you with Endearment as his Bretbren, and will acknowledge the Kindneffes which have been freun to you, as if he had received them in his own Person (1). Yea, then shall you, O Christian, who may perhaps have fat in some of the lowest Places in our Affemblies, tho' (it may be) none of the Rich and Great of the Earth would condescend to look upon or to speak to you, be called to be Affeffors with Christ on his Judgment-Seat, and to join with Him in the Sentence he shall pass on wicked Men and rebellious Angels.

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(i) Luke xii. &

6. 12. Non is it merely one Day of Glory and of Triumph. But when the ludge arises and ascends to His Father's Court, all the Bleffed shall ascend with Him, and you among the rest : You shall ascend together with your Saviour, to His Father, and your Father, to His GOD and your GOD (m). You shall go, to make your Appearance in the New Jerufalem, in those new shining Forms that you have received, which will no doubt be attended with a correspondent Improvement of Mind; and take up your perpetual Abode in that Fulness of Joy, with which you shall be filled and satisfied in the Presence of GOD (n), upon the Confummation of that Happiness, which the Saints in the intermediate State have been wishing and waiting for. You shall go from the Ruins of a dissolving World, to the new Heavens and new Earth wherein Righteoufness for ever dwells (6). There all the Number of GOD's Elect shall be accomzlished, and the Happiness of each shall be compleated. The whole Society shall be presented before GOD, as the Bride, the Lamb's Wife (p), whom the Eye of its Celefial

⁽g) Phil. iii. 9. (h) 2 Tim. iv. 8.

⁽h) Matt. x x v. 11. (i) Matt. x x v. 40. (n) John xx. 17. (p) Rev. xxi. 9. (p) Rev. xxi. 9

Bridegroom shall survey with unutterable Delight and consels to be without Spot or Wrinkle, or any such Thing (q); its Character and State being just what He originally designed it to be, when He sirst engaged to give bimself for it to redeem it to GOD by his Blood (r). So shall you ever be with each other, and with the Lord (s); and immortal Ages shall roll away, and find you still unchanged; your Happiness always the same, and your Relish for it the same; or rather ever growing, as your Souls are approaching nearer and nearer to Him, who is the Source of Happiness, and the Centre of infinite Pertection.

§ 13 AND now, look round about upon Earth, and fingle out, if you can, the Enjoyments or the Hopes, for the Sake of which you would fay, Lord, delay thy Coming; or for the Sake of which you any more should hesitate to express your Longing for it, and to cry, Even So come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!

The MEDITATION and PRAYER of a CHRISTIAN whose Heart is warmed with these Prospects.

BLESSED LORD! My Soul is enkindled in these Views, and rises to Thee in the Flame (t). Thou hast testified Thou comest quickly: And I repeat my joyful Assent, Amen, even so come Lord Jesus (u). Come, for I long to have done with this low Life; to have done with its Burthens, its Sorwows, and its Snares! Come, for I long to ascend into Thy Presence, and to see the Court Thou art holding above!

"Bleffed Jesus, Death is transformed, when I view it in this Light: The King of Terrors is feen no more as such, so near the King of Glory, and of Grace. I

" hear with Pleasure the Sound of Thy Feet, approaching " fill nearer and nearer: Draw aside the Veil, when-

" ever Thou pleasest! Open the Bars of my Prison, that my eager Soul may spring forth to Thee, and cast it-

" felf at Thy Feet; at the Feet of that Jesus, whom baving not feen, I love; and in whom, tho' now I fee ... Thee

(q) Eph. v. 27. (r) Rev. v. 9. (s) 1 Thest. iv. 17. (t) Judg, xiii. 30. (u) Rev. xxii. 20.

The Meditation of a Christian, Chap. 29. 300 "Thee not, yet believing, I rejoice with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory (y)! Thou, Lord, Shalt show me the " Path of Life: Thine Hand shall guide me to Thy or blissful Abode, where there is falness of Joy, and 66 Rivers of everlasting Pleasure (2). Thou shalt assign ". me an Habitation with Thy faithful Servants, whole " feparate Spirits are now living with Thee, while their Bodies sleep in the Duft. Many of them have been of my Companions in Thy Laborious Work, and in the 6. Patience and Tribulation of Thy Kingdom (a); my dear companions and my Brethren. Oh shew me, Blessed " Saviour, how glorious and how happy Thou haft " made them! Shew me, to what new Forms of better 6. Life Thou hast conducted them, whom we call the of Dead! in what nobler and more extensive Services "Thou hast employed them! that I may praise Thee " better than I now can, for Thy Goodness to them! " And Oh give me to share with them in their Bleslings " and their Services, and to raife a Song of grateful " Love, like that which they are breathing forth before "Thee! "Yet, O my bleffed Redeemer, even there will my soul be aspiring to a yet nobler and more glorious " Hope: and from this as yet unknown Splendor and er Felicity, shall I be drawing new Arguments to look " and long for the Day of Thy final Appearance. There " shall I long more ardently than I now do, to fee Thy Conduct vindicated, and Thy Triumph displayed; " to fee the Dust of Thy Servants re-animated, and Death the last of their Enemies and of Thine, Swal-6. loqued up in Victory (b). I shall long for that superior " Honour that Thou intendest me, and that compleat " Bifs to which the whole Body of Thy People shall " be conducted. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, will " mingle itself with the Songs of Paradite, and found " from the Tongues of all the Millions of Thy Saints, " whom Thy Grace has transplanted thither. " In the mean Time, O my Divine Master, accept " the Homage which a grateful Heart now pays I hee, " in a Sense of the glorious Hope with which thou hall " inspired

(2) Pfal. xvi. 11.

(a) Rev. i 9.

(v) 1 Pet. i. 8

(b) 1 Cor. xv. 26, 54.

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Chap. 29. in the View of Death and Judgment. inspired it! It is Thou that hast put this Joy into it, and haft raised my Soul to this glorious Ambition; whereas I might otherwise have now been grovelling " in the lowest trisles of Time and Sense, and been " looking with Horror on that Hour, which is now the

. Object of my most ardent Wishes.

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" Oh he with me always even to the End of this mor-" tal Life! and give me, while waiting for Thy Salva-" ion, to be doing Thy Commandments! May my Loins " be girded about, and my Lamp burning (c); and mine " Ears be still watchful for the bleffed Signal of Thine " Arrival: That my glowing Soul may with Picafure of fpring to meet Thee, and be strengthened by Death to bear those Visions of Glory, under the Extalies of " which feeble Mortality would now expire!"

(c) Luke x ii. 35.

CHAP. XXX.

The CHRISTIAN honouring God by his Dying Behaviour.

Reflections on the Sincerity with which the preceding Ad. vices bave been given, §. 1. The Author is defirous, that (if Providence permit) be may affift the Christian to die honourably and comfortably, § 2, 3. With this View it is advised, (1.) To rid the Mind of all Earthly Cares, §. 4. (2.) To renew the Humiliation of the Soul before GOD, and its Application to the Blood of Christ, S. 5. (3.) To exercise Patience under bodily Pains and Sorrows. §. 6. (4.) At leaving the World, to bear an honourable Testimony to Religion. S. 7. (5.) To give a folemn Charge to furviving Friends, §. 8. especially recommending Faith in Christ. §. 9. (6.) % keep the Promises of GOD in View, \. 10, 11. And (7.) To commit the departing Spirit to GOD in the genuine Exercises of Gratitude and Repentance, Faith and Charity; §. 12. which are exemplified in the concluding Meditation and Prayer.

to lead you thro' a Variety of Circumstances; and those not fancied or imaginary, but such as do indeed occur in the Human and Christian Life. And I can truly and chearfully say, that I have marked out to you the Path which I myself have trod, and in which it is my Desire still to go on. I have ventured my own Everlasting Interests on that Foundation, on which I have directed you to adventure yours. What I have recommended as the grand Business of your Life, I desire to make the Business of my own; And the most considerable

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Chap. 30. Advised to die bonourably and comfortably. 303 Enjoyments, which I expect or defire in the remaining Days of my Pilgrimage on Earth, are such as I have directed you to seek, and endeavoured to assist you in attaining. Such Love to God, such constant Activity in his Service, such pleasurable Views of what lies beyond the Grave, appear to me, (Gods is my Witness,) a Felicity incomparably beyond any Thing else which can offer itself to our Affection and Pursuit: And I would not for Ten Thousand Worlds, resign my Share in them, or consent even to the Suspension of the Delights which they afford, during the remainder of my Abode here.

§ 2. I would humbly hope, thro' the Divine Bieffing, that the Hours you have spent in the Review of these plain Things, may have turned to some profitable Account; and that in Consequence of what you have read, you have either been brought into the Way of Life and Peace, or been induced to quicken your Pace in it. Molt heartily should I rejoice in being further useful to you, and that even to the last. Now there is one Scene remaining; a Scene, thro' which you must infallibly pass; which has fomething in it fo awful, that I cannot but attempt doing a little to affilt you in it; I mean the dark Valley of the Shadow of Death. I could earnestly wish, that for the Credit of your Profession, the Comfort of your own Soul, and the Joy and Edification of your surviving Friends, you might die, not only safely, but bonourably too: And therefore I would offer you a few parting Advices. I am sensible indeed, that Providence may determine the Circumstances of your Death in such a Manner, as that you may have no Opportunity of acting upon the Hints I now give you. Some, unexpected Accident from without or from within, may as It were whirl you to Heaven before you are aware; and you may find yourself so suddenly there, that it may feem a Translation, rather than a Death. Or it is possible the Force of a Distemper may affect your Understanding in such a Manner, that you may be quite intentiale of the Circum inces in which you are; and to your Diffolution (tno' others may fee it visibly and certainly approaching,) may be as great a Surprize to you, as if you had died in full Health.

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and as much may, in various Respects, depend on your dying Behaviour, give me Leave to propose some plain Directions with Rela ion to it, to be practised, if Gon give you Opportunity, and remind you of them. It may not be improper to look over the xxixth Chapter again, when you find the Symptoms, of any threatning Disorder: And I the rather hope, that what I say may be useful to you, as methinks I find myself disposed to address you with something of that peculiar Tenderness which we feel for a dying Friend; to whom, as we expect that we shall speak to him no more, we fend out

as it were all our Hearts in every Word.

S. 4. I would advise then, in the first Place, " that " as foon as possible, you would endeavour to get rid of " all farther Care with Regard to your Temporal Con-" cerns, by fettling them in Time in as Reasonable and " Christian a Manner as you can." I could wish, there may be nothing of that kind to hurry your Mind when you are least able to bear it, or to distress or divide those who come after you. Do that which in the Presence of God you judge most equitable, and which you verily believe will be most pleasing to Him. Do it in as prudent and effectual a Manner as you can; and then confider the World as a Place you have quite done with, and its Affairs as nothing further to you, more than to one actually dead; unless as you may do any good to its Inhabitants, while yet you continue among them, and may, by any Circumstance in your last Actions or Words in Life, leave a Bleffing behind you to those who have been your Friends and Fellow- Travellers, while you have been dispatching that Journey thro' it, which you are now finishing.

of 5. That you may be the more at Leisure, and the better prepared for this, "enter into some serious "Review of your own State, and endeavour to put your "Soul into as sit a Posture as possible, for your solema "Appearance before God." For a solemn Thing indeed it is, to go into His immediate Presence; to stand before Him, not as a Supplicant at the Throne of His Grace, but at His Bar as a Separate Spirit, whose Time of Probation is over, and whose Eternal State is to be immediately determined. Renew your Humiliation before God for the Impersections of your Life, tho' it

Chap. 30. look to Christ, and exercise Patience. 305 has in the Main been devoted to his Service. Renew your Application to the Mercies of Gob as promised in the Covenant of Grace, and to the Blood of Christ as the blessed Channel in which they show. Resign your-felfentirely to the Divine Disposal and Conduct, as willing to serve God, either in this World or the other, as He sha'l see sit. And sensible of your Sinfulness on the one Hand, and of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness on the other, summon up all the Fortitude of your Soul to bear as well as you can whatever his afflicting Hand may surther lay upon you, and to recieve the last Stroke of it, as one who would maintain the most entire Subjection to the great and good Father of Spirits.

6. 6. WHATEVER you suffer, endeavour to shew " yourfelf an Brample of Patience." Let that amiable Grace bave its perfect Work (a); and fince it has fo little more to do, let it close the Scene nobly. Let there not be a murmuring Word; and that there may not, watch against every repining Thought: And when you feel any Thing of that Kind arising, look by Faith upon a dying Saviour, and alk your own Heart, " Was not " his Cross much more painful, than the Bed on which " I lie? Was not his Situation among Blood-thirty " Enemies infinitely more terrible, than mine amidit " the Tenderness and Care of so many affectionate " Friends? Did not the heavy Load of my Sins press " Him in a much more overwhelming Manner, than " I am pressed by the Load of these Afflictions; and " yet he bore all as a Lamb that is brought to the " Slaughter (b)." Let the Remembrance of His Sufferings be a Means to sweeten yours; yea, let it cause you to rejoice, when you are called to bear the Cross for a little while, before you wear the Crown. Count it all jy, that you have an Opportunity yet once more of honouring God by your Patience, which is now acting its last Part, and will in a few Days, perhaps in a few Hours, be superseded by compleat everlatting Blessednels. And I am willing to hope, that in these Views you will not only suppress all passionate Complaints, but that your Mouth will be filled with the Praises of Goo and that you will be speaking to those that are

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about you, not only of His Justice, but of His Goodness too. So that you will be enabled to communicate
your inward Joy in such a Manner as may be a lively
and edifying Comment upon those Words of the Apollie,
Tribulation worketh Patience; and Patience, Experience;
and Experience, Hope; even a Hope which maketh not
ashamed, while the Love of GOD is shed abroad in our
Hearts, by the Hop Ghost which is given unto us (c).

§. 7. And now, my dear Friend, " now is the Time, when it is especially expected from you, that you " bear an bonourable Testimony to Religion." Tell inole that are about you, as well as you can, (for you will never be able fully to express it,) what Comfort and Support you have found in it. Tell them how it has brightened the darkest Circumstances of your Life: Tell them, how it now reconciles you to the near Views of Death. Your Words will carry with them a peculiar Weight at such a Season: There will be a kind of Eloquence, even in the Infirmities with which you are thruggling, while you give them utterance; and you will be heard with Attention, with Tenderness, with And therefore, when the Time of your Departure is at Hand, with unaffected Freedom preathe out your Joy, if you then feel (as I hope you will,) an holy Joy and Delight in Gop. Breathe out however your inward Peace and Serenity of Mind, if you be then peaceful and serene: Others will mark it, and be encouraged to tread the Steps which lead to fo happy an Tell them what you feel of the Vanity of the World; and they may learn to regard it leis. them what you feel of the substantial Supports of the Gospel; and they may learn to value it more: For they cannot but know, that they mult lie down on a dying B d too, and must then need all the Relief which the Gospel itself can give them.

§: 8. AND to inforce the Conviction the more, "give a folemn Charge to those that are about you, that they pend their Lives in the Service of GOD, and govern themselves by the Principles of real Religion." You may remember, that Joshua, and David, and other good Men did so; when they perceived that the Days arew

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Chap. 30. and recommend Faith in Christ to others. 307 near in which they should die. And you know not, how the Admonitions of a dying Friend, or (as it may be with respect to some,) of a dying Parent, may impress those who may have difregarded what you and others may have faid to them before. At least, make the Trial, and die, labouring to glorify God, to fave Souls, and generously to fow the S eds of Goodness and Happiness in a World, where you have no more Harvest to reap. Perhaps they may spring up in a plentiful Crop, when the Clods of the Valley are covering your Body: But if not, Gon will approve it; and the Angels, that wait around your Bed to receive your departing Soul, will look upon each other with Marks of Approbation in their Countenance, and own, that this is to expire like a Christian, and to make a glorious Improvement of Mortality.

6. 9. And in this last Address to your Fellow Mortale, whoever they are that Providence brings near you, " befure that you teil them how entirely and how chearfully your Hopes and Dependance in this Season of " the last Extremity are fixed, not upon your own Me-" rits and Ovedience, but on what the great Redeemer bas done and has suffered for Sinners." Let them fee, that you die as it were at the Foot of the Cross: Nothing will be fo comfortable to yourselves, nothing so edifying to them. Let the Name of Jesus, therefore be in your Mouth, while you are able to speak, and when you can speak no longer, let it be in your Heart, and endeavour that the last Act of your Soul, while it continues in the Body, may be an Act of humble Faith in CHRIST. Come unto GOD by Him: Enter into that which is within the Veil, as with the Blood of Sprinkling fresh upon you. It is an awful Thing for such a Sinner, (as you, my Chrittian Friend, with all the Virtues the World may have admired, know yourfelf to be,) to stand before that infinitely pure and holy Being, who has feen all your Ways, and all your Heart, and has a periect Knowledge of every Mix use of Imperfection which has attended the best of your Duries: But venture in that Way, and you will find it ooth late and pleafant.

§ 10. One more, " to give you Comfort in a dying "Hour, and to support your feeble Steps while you are

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§. 11. Can any more Encouragement be wanting, when He says, Fear not, for I am with Thee; be not dismayed for I am thy GOD; I will strengthen thee, yea I will belp thee, yea I will uphold thee, with the Right-Hand of my Righteousness (e). And He is not a Man that He should he, or the Son of Man, that He should repent: Hath he said, and shall He not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good (1)?—The Lord is my Light, and my Salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the Strength of my Life, of whom shall I be afraid (g)? This GOD is our GOD for ever and ever: He will be our Guide even unto Death (h). Therefore, the I walk throthe Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil; for Thou art with me. Thy Rod and Thy Staff they comfort me (i). I have waited for Thy Salvatiou, O Lord (k).

⁽d) Pfal, cxix. 72. (e) Ifai, xli, 10. (f) Numb. xxiii, 19. (g) Pfal, xxvii. 1. (h) Pfal, xlviii, 14. (i) Pfal, xxiii. 4. (k) Gen, xlix. 18.

Oh continue Thy Loving Kindness unto them that know Thee, and Thy Righteousness to the upright in Heart! For with Thre is the Fountain of Life; in thy Light shall we fee Light (1). Thou wilt shew me the Path of Life; in thy Prefence is Fulnefs of Joy, at Thy Right-Hand there are Pleafures for evermore (m). As for me I shall behold Thy Face in Righteoufnefs: I shall be fatisfied when I awake, with thy Likeness (n). For I know in whom I have believed, and am perfuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day (o). Therefore my Heart is glad, and my Glory rejoiceth; my Flesh also shall rest in Hope (p). For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again; those also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him (q) .- I give unto my Sheep Eternal Life, (faid Jesus, the good Shepherd,) and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my Hand (r). This is the Will of Him that fent me, that every one that believeth on me should have everlasting Life; and I will raise him up at the last Day (s). Let not your Heart be troubled; ye believe in GOD, believe also in me. In my Father's House are many Mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a Place for you: And if I go and prepare a Place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myfelf; that where I am, there may ye be also (t). Go, tell my Brethren, I ascend unto my Father and your Futber, and to my GOD and your GOD (u). Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory which Thou hast given me; that the Love wherewith Thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them (x). - He that testifieth these Things, Jaith, Surely I come quickly, Amen : Even so come, Lord Jesus (y)! O Death where is thy Sting? O Grave where is thy Victory? Thanks be to GOD, who giveth us the Victory thro' our Lord Fefus Christ (z).

12. Thus may that God who knows the Souls of his Children in all their Advertities (a), and in whose Sight the Death of his Saints is precious (b), chear and

⁽n) Pfal. xvii. 15. (') Pfal xxxvi. 9, 10. (m) Pfal xvi. 11. (o) 2 Tim. i. 12. (q) 1 Tsess. iv. 14. (p) Pfal. xvi. 9.

⁽¹⁾ John x. 28. (2) John xx. 17. (3) John xvii 24, 26. (4) I Cor. xv. 55, 57. (a) Pfal, xxxi. 7. (t) John xiv. 1, 2, 3. (y) Rev. xxii. 20.

⁽b) Plal. cxvi. 15. (a) Pial. xxxi. 7.

fupport you and me in those last Extremities of Nature! May he add us to the happy Number of those who have been more than Conquerors in Death! And may He give us those Supplies of His Spirit, which may enable us to pour out our departing Souls in such Sentiments, as those I would now suggest; tho' we should be no longer able to utter Words, or to understand them if they were to be read to us! Let us at least review them with all proper Affections now, and lay up one Prayer more for that awful Moment! Oh that this, and all we have ever fiered with Regard to it, may then come in Remembrance before GOD (c)!

A MEDITATION and PRAYER, furted to the Caje of a dying Christian.

Thou supreme Ruler of the Visible and Invi-" fible Worlds! Thou Sovereign of Life and of " Death; of Earth and of Heaven! Bleffed be Thy " Name, I have often been taught to feek Thee And " now once more do I pour out my Soul, my departing Soul unto Thee. Bow down Thy gracious Ear O GOD and let my Cry come before Thee with Acceptance! " The Hour is come, when I'hou wilt separate me from this World, with which I have been fo long and of fo familiarly acquainted, and lead me to another, as " yet unknown. Enable me I beseech Thee, to make " the Exchange, as becomes a Child of Abraham, who being called of Thee to receive an Inheritance, obeyed and went out, tho' he knew not particularly whither he " went (d); as becomes a Child of GOD, who knows, " that thro' Sovereign Grace, it is his Father's good .. Pleasure to give bim the Kingdom (e)!

"Iacknowledge, O Lord, the Justice of that Sentence by which I am expiring; and own Thy Wisdom and Goodness, in appointing my Journey thro' this gloomy

Vale which is now before me. Help me to turn it into the happy Occasion of honouring Thee, and

" adorning my Profession! and I will bless the Pangs, by which Thou art glorified, and this mortal and

" finful Part of my Nature is dissolved.

(e) Luke xii. 32

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Chap. 30. Suited to the Case of a dying Christian. "Gracious Father, I would not quit this Earth of "Thine, and this House of Clay in which I have " fojourned during my Abode upon the Face of it," " without my grateful Acknowledgments to Thee, for all " that abundant Goodness which Thou hast caused to " pass before me here (f). With my dying Breath, I bear " Witness to Thy faithful Care, I have wanted no good " Thing (g). I thank Thee, O my God, that this " guilcy forfeited, unprofitable Life was fo long spared: "That it hath still been maintain'd by such a Rich " Variety of Thy Bounty. I thank Thee that Thou " halt made this Beginning of my Existence so pleasant " to me. I thank Thee, for the Mercies of my Days " and Nights, of my Months and Years, which are now " come to their Period: I thank Thee, for the Mercies " of my Infancy, and for those of my riper Age; tor " all the agreeable Friends which Thou hast given me " in this House of my Pilgrimage, the Living and the " Dead; for all the Help I have received from others; " and for all the Opportunities which Thou hast given " me of being helpful to the Bodies or Souls of my " Brethren of Mankind. Surely Goodness and Mercy " have followed me all the Days of my Life (h), and I " have Reason to rise a thankful Guest from the various " and pleasant Entertainments with which my Table " has been furnished by Thee. Nor shall I have Rea-" fon to repine, or to grieve at quitting them: For, O " my Gon, are Thy Bounties exhaufted? I know, that they are not. I will not wrong Thy Goodness and " Thy Faithfulness fo much as to imagine, that because " I am going from this Earth, I am going from Hap-" piness. I adore Thy Mercy that thou hall taught " me to enter in nobler Views thro' Jasus Thy Son. " I bless Thee with all the Powers of my Nature, that " I ever heard of his Name, and heard of his Death : " And would fain exert a more vigorous Act of thank-" ful Adoration, than in this broken State I am capable " of, while I am extolling Thee, for the Riches of Thy " Grace manifested in Him; for His Instructions and " His Example, for His Blood and His Rightoousnels,

" and for that Bleffed SPIRIT of Thinewhich Thou haft

(f) Exod. xxxiii. 19. (g) Pfal. xxxiv 10. (h) Pfal. xxiii. 6.

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" Thine: Save me (0) and make me happy!

"But may I indeed prefume to fay, I am Thine?

"O God, now I am flanding on the Borders of both
"Worlds, now I view Thines, as in the Light of The

"Worlds, now I view Things, as in the Light of Thy Presence, and of Eternity, how unworthy do I appear,

"that I should be taken to dwell with Thy Angels and Saints

(i) 2 Sam, xxiii 5. (k) 2 Cor. i. 20. (1) Pfal. cxix. 49. (n) Rom. vi. 28. (n) Pfal. xxxi. 5. (o) Pfal. cxix. 94.

Chap. 30. Suited to the Case of a dying Christian. " Saints in Glory! Alas I have Reason to look back with deep Humiliation on a poor unprofitable-field " Life, in which I have daily been deferving to be cast into Hell. But I have this one comfortable Reflection, " that I have fled to the Cross of Christ; and I now re-" new my Application to it. To think of appearing before God in fuch an imperfect Rightedulnels as my " own, were Ten Thousand Times worse than Death. No, Lord! I come unto Thee as a Sinner; but as a " Sinner who has believed in Thy Son for Pardon and " Life; Ifall down before Thee as a guilty polluted " Wretch ; but Thou hast made Him to be unto Thy 4. People for Wisdom and Righteousness, for Sanctification " and Redemption (p). Let me have my Lot among the Followers of Isses! Treat me, as thou treatest those " who are His Friends, and His Brethren! For Thou "knowest, my Soul has loved Him, and trusted him, " and folemnly ventured itself on the Security of His " Gospel. And I know in subom I have believed (q). ". The Infernal Lion may attempt to difmay me in the " awful Passage: But I rejoice that I am in the Hands " of the good Shepherd (r); and I-defy all my Spiritual " Enemies, in a chearful Dependance on His faithful " Care. I lift up my Eyes and my Heart to Him, who " was dead and is alive again; and behold, He lives for " evermore, and bath the Keys of Death and of the unscen " World (s). Bleffed Jesus, I die by Thine Hand, and " I fear no Harm from the Hand of a Saviour! I fear " not that Death, which is allotted to me by the Hand " of my dearest Lord, who himself died to make it " fafe and happy. I come, Lord, I come not only " with a willing, but with a joyful Consent. I thank "Thee, that Thou rememberest me for Good; that Thou " art breaking my Chains, and calling me to the glorious Liberty of the Children of GOD (t). I thank Thee, " that Thou wilt no longer permit me to live at a Dif-" tance from Thine Arms; but after this long Absence, wilt have me at Home, at Home for ever. " My feeble Nature faints in the View of that Glory " which is now dawning upon me: But Thou knowest

(p) 1 Cor. i. 30. (q) 2 Tim. i. 12. (r) John x. 11, 12. (s) Rev. i. 18. (t) Rom. viii. 21.

on the Wings of everlasting Love, to that peaceful, " that holy, that joyous Abode, which Thy Mercy has " prepared for me, and which the Blood of my Re-" deemer, hath purchased! Bear me to the general Af-" fembly and Church of the First-born, to the innumerable " Company of Angels, and to the Spirits of just Men made et perfedt (y). And whatever this Flesh may suffer, let er my steady Soul be delightfully fixed on that Giory to which it is rifing! Let Faith perform its last Of-" fice in an honourable Manner! Let my few remain-" ing Moments on Earth be spent for Thy Glory, and " fo let me ascend, with Love in my Heart, and Praise on my faultering Tongue, to the World where Love " and Praise shall be compleat! Be this my last Song, on Earth, which I am going to tune in Heaven; Blef. " ing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power be unto Him " that fitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and

(u) 2 Cor. xii. 9? (w) Ifai. li. 3. (x) Luke iii 6. (y) Heb. xii. 22, 23. (z) Rev. v. 13.

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AS I would not willingly incur the Censure of being overforward in publishing so plain a Sermon on so common a Subject. I beg Leave to inform the Reader of the Occession that determined me to do it.

The following Diffourse was first preached to a very numerous Auditory at the Funeral of a young Person, who being sexed on a sudden with a violent and mortal Illness, which nevertheless did not destroy the Exercise of her Reason, was deeply impressed with a Sense of her et rnal Interest, and expressed that Sense in a Manner which affected me as much as any Thing of that Nature which I had ever seen; not only recommending the Text to me, but also charging this one Thing needful on her Brother and Sisters, in my Hearing, with a Solemnity and Earnestness, which I hope neither they nor I shall ever forget. But I imputed the remarkable Attention with which the Sermon was heard, and the kind Notice which was afterwards taken of it by many, to that awful Circumstance, rather than to any Thing in the Discourse itself.

I had afterwards the Honour to preach it with some proper Alterations, before some worthy and excellent Persons of confiderable Rank and Eminence in Life, who are not ashamed publickly to own, that Religion is their greatest Concern. They were pleased to express such Satisfaction in the Seriousness and Plainness with which this important Subject was bardled, that they urved me, with an Earnestness which I did not at all expect, to let them have some printed Copies of it, that they might disperse them amongst their Tenants and Servants. I think too highly of these valuable Friends to presix their Names to so inconsiderable a Performance, which would do a great Honour to a Book, far superior to any I can ever hope to present them with. But as I am well assured of their continued Candour towards me; so I hope the Authority of their Command, will be allowed as a suf-

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ficient Apology for this Publication.

We are so near the Eternal State, and must so soon be filem in the Dust, that methinks nothing which looks like a Call of Providence, directing to any Opportunity of doing good to the Souls of Men, should be neglected. And if these obvious but weighty Truths may, through the Concurrence of Divine Grace, be made useful for the Conversion of one of the lowest of those for whose Service this Discourse was asked and transcribed, I shall think this little Labour abundantly respect, even though many others should say, as they probably will, that I have made a little Addition to the Number of unnecessary Books with which the World is already incumbered.

London, July 29, 1735.

P. DODDRIDGE,

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LUKE X. 42. former Part.

ONE THING is Needful.

T was the amiable Character of our bleffed Redeem-I er, that he went about doing good. This great Motive, which animated all his Actions, brought him to the house of his Friend Lazarus, at Bethang, and directed his Behaviour there. Though it was a Season of Recess from publick Labour, our Lord brought the Sentiments and the pious Cares of a Preacher of Righteousness into the Parlour of a Friend; and there his Doctrine dropped as the Rain, and distilled as the Dew, on the little happy Circle that were then furrounding Mary the Sister of Lazarus, with great Delight made one amongst them; she sat herself down at the Feet of Jesus, in the posture of an humble Disciple; and we have a great deal of Reason to believe, that Martha, his other Sitter, would gladly have been with her there; but domestic Cares pressed hard upon her, and she was cumbered with much serving, being perhaps too solicitous to prepare a sumptuous Entertainment for her heavenly Master and the Train that attended Him. Happy are they, that in a Crowd of Business do not lose something of the Spirituality of their Minds, and of the Composure and Sweetness of their Tempers! This good Woman comes to our Lord with too impatient a Complaint; infinuating some little Reflection, not only on Mary, but on himself too. Lord doft thou not care that my Sifter hath left me to serve alone? Bid ber therefore that she help me t. Our Lord, willing to take all Opportunities of luggesting useful Thoughts, answers her in the e Words,

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of which the Text is a Part, Martha, Martha, thou an careful and troubled about many Things, but one Thing is needful, and Mary has chosen that good Part, which shall no be taken away from her, as if he had said Alas Martha! the Concerns of the Soul are of fo much greater Importance than those of the Body, that I cannot blame your Sister on this Occasion: I rather recommend her to your Initation, and caution you, and all my other Friends, to be much on your Guard, that in the midft of your worldly Cares you do not lose the Sight of that which so much better deserves your Attention.

I shall consider these Words, One Thing is needful, a a kind of Aphorism; or wife and weighty Sentence, dropped from the Mouth of our bleffed Redeemer, and evidently worthy of our most serious Regard. In hand-

ling them I shall,

I. Confider what we are to understand by the on Thing here spoken of

II. hew you what is intended when it is represented as the one Thing needful.

III. I will shew how justly it may be so represented, or prove that 'tis indeed the one I hing needful.

IV. Conclude with some Reflections and Application.

My Friends, the Words which are now before us are to this Day, as true, as they were seventeen hundred Years ago. Set your Hearts to attend to them. Oh that you might, by divine Grace, be awakened to hear them with a due regard, and might be fo impressed with the plain and ferious Things which are now to be spoken, as you probably would, if I were speaking by your dy ing Beds, and you had the full Exercise of your Reason, and the near and lively View of Eternity!

I. I am briefly to confider what we are to understand

by the one Thing needful.

Now I answer in a few Words, it is the Care of the Soul, opposed, as you see in the Text, to the Care, the is, the excessive Care of the Body, for which Marib was gently admonished by our Lord. This is a general Answer, and it comprehends a Variety of important Par

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ticulars, which is the Business of our Ministry often to open to you at large: The Care of the Soul implies a Readiness to hear the Words of Christ, to set ourselves with Mary at his Feet, and to receive both the Law and the Gospel from his Mouth. It supposes that we learn from this divine Teacher the Worth of our Souls, their Danger and their Remedy. That we become above all Things folicitous about their eternal Salvation. That, heartily repenting of all our Sins, and cordially believing the everlasting Gospel, we receive the Lord Jesus Christ for Righteousness and Life, resting our Souls on the Value of his Atonement, and the Efficacy of his Grace. It imports the fincere Dedication of ourselves to the Service of God and a faithful Adherence to it, notwithstanding all the Oppositions arising from inward Corruptions, or outward Temptations, and a resolute Perseverance in the Way of Gospel-Dependance, till we receive the End of our Faith in our complete Salvation. This is the one Thing needful, represented indeed in various Scriptures by various Names. Sometimes it is called Regeneration, or the New Creature, because 'tis the blessed Work of Gon's efficacious Grace. Sometimes the Fear of God, and sometimes bis Love, and the keeping his Commandments; and very frequently in the New Testament is called Faith, or receiving Christ, and believing on him, which therefore is represented as the great Work of God +; that is the great Thing which God in his glorious Gospel requires, as well as by his Spirit produces in us; Each of these, if rightly understood and explained, comprehends all that I have said on this Head. On the whole we may fay, that as the Body is one, though it has many Members, and the Soul is one though it has many Faculties; so in the present Cafe, this real, vital Religion is one Thing, one facred Principle of divine Life bringing us to attend to the Care of our Souls, as of our greatest. Treasure. 'Tis one Thing, notwithstanding all the Variety of Views in which it may be confidered, and of Characters under which it may be described. I proceed,

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II. To consider what may be intended in the Representation which is here made of it, as the one Thing

needful.

Now I think it naturally includes these three Particulars: Tis a Matter of universal Concern, of the highest Importance, and of so comprehensive a Nature, that every Thing which is truly worthy of our Regard may be considered as included in it, or subservient to it. Let me a little illustrate each of these Particulars, reserving the Proof of what I now affert to the third General, where it will abundantly appear,

1. The Care of the Soul may be called the one Thing

needful, " as it is Matter of universal Concern."

Our Lord you fee speaks of it as needful in the general. He fays not for this or that particular Person; or for those of fuch an Age, Station, or Circumstance in Life, but needful for all. And indeed, when discoursing on fuch a Subject, one might properly introduce it with those solemn' Words of the Pfalmist, Give Ear, all ye People, hear, all the Inhabitants of the Earth, both High and Low, Rich and Poor together * For 'tis the Concern of all, from the King that fits upon the Throne, to the Servant that grindeth at the Mill, or the Beggar that lieth upon the Dunghill. 'Tis needful for us that are Ministers, for our own Salvation is concerned. And Woe, insupportable Woe will be to our Souls, if we think it enough to recommend it to others, to talk of it in a warm, or an awful Manner, in publick Assemblies, or in our private Converse, while it does not penetrate our Hearts as our own greatest Care. Our Case will then be like that of the Israelitish Lord in Samaria +, who was employed to distribute the Corn when the Siege was raised, seeing it with our Eyes, and dispensing it with our Hands, we shall ourselves die miserably, without tasting the Bleffings we impart. 'Tis needful to all you that are our Hearers, without the Exception of one fingle Person. 'T'is needful to you that are rich, though it may on some Accounts be peculiarly difficult for you; even as difficult, comparatively speaking, as for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle 1; yet if it be neglected, you are poor in the midst of all your Wealth, and miserable

^{*} Pfalm xlix. 1, 2. † 2 Kings vii, 2. 1 Matt. xix. 24.

in all your Abundance; and a Wretch starving for Hunger, in a magnificent Palace and a rich Dress, would be less the Object of Compassion than you. 'Tis needful for you that are poor; though you are distressed with so many anxious Cares, what you shall eat, and what you shall drink, and wherewithal you shall be cleathed * The Nature that makes you capable of fuch Anxieties as these, argues your much greater Concern in the Bread which endures to Eternal Life +, than in that by which this mortal Body must be supported. 'Tis needful for you that are advanced in Years, though your Strength be impaired so that the Grashopper is a Burden 1; though you have by your long Continuance in Sin rendered this great Work so hard, that were it less important, one would in Pity let you alone without reminding you of it: Yet late as it is, it must be done, or your hoary Heads will be brought down to the Grave with Wrath, and fink under a Curle aggravated by every Year and by every Day of your Lives. 'Tis needful to you that are young, though folicited by so many gay Vanities, to neglect it; though it may be represented as an unseafonable Care at present, yet I repeat it, it is needful to you; immediately needful, unless you who walk so frequently over the Dust of your Brethren and Companions, that died in the Bloom and Vigour of their Days, have made some secret Covenant with the Grave for yourselves, and found out some wonderful Method, hitherto unknown, of fecuring this precarious Life, and of answering for Days and Months to come, while others cannot answer for one single Moment.

2. The Care of the Soul is "a Matter of the highest "Importance;" beyond any Thing which can be brought

into Comparison with it.

As Solomon fays of Wisdom, that it is more precious than Rubies and that all Things which can be defired are not to be compared with her ||, so may I properly say of this great, and most important Branch of Wisdom, whatever can be laid in the Balance with it, will be found altogether lighter than Vanity. This is strongly implied when 'tis said in the Text, one Thing is needful; that is one Thing, and

^{*} Matt. vi. 3r. † John vi. 27. ‡ Ecclef. xii. 5.

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1 Matt. vi. 25.

** Ecclef. xii. 13.

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one Thing alone is fo. Just as the bleffed God is faid to he only wife*, and only boly+, because the Wisdom and Holiness of Angels and Men is as nothing, when compared with his. What seems most great and most important in Life, what Kings and Senates, what the wifer, and greatest of this World are employing their Time, their Counsels, their Pens, their Labours upon, are Trifles, when compared with this one Thing. A Man may fubfift, he may in some considerable measure be happy, without Learning, without Riches, without Titles, without Health, without Liberty, without Friends, nay, though, the Life be more than Meat, and the Body than Raiment t, yet may he be happy, unspeakably happy, without the Body itself. But he cannot be so in the Neglect of the one Thing needful. I must therefore bespeak your Regard to it in the Words of Moses, it is not a light thing, but it is our Life ||.

3. The Care of the Soul is of fo comprehensive a Nature, that "every thing truly worthy of our Regard may be considered as included in it, or subservient to it."

As David observes, that the Commandment of God is exceeding broad fo may we fay of this one Thing needful; and as Solomon very justly and emphatically expresses it, to fear God, and to keep his Commandments, is the whole of Men**; his whole Duty, and his whole Interest; and every thing which is wife and rational does in its proper Place and Connection make a Part of it. We should judge very ill concerning the Nature of this Care, if we imagined that it confided merely in Acts of Devotion, or religious Contemplation; it comprehends all the lovely and harmonious Band of focial and humane Virtues. It requires a Care of Society, a Care of our Bodies, and of our temporal Concerns; but then all is to te regulated, directed, and animated by proper Regards to God, Christ, and Immortality, Our Food and our Rett, our Trades and our Labours are to be attended to, and all the Offices of Fumanity performed in Obedience to the Will of Gcd, for the Glery of Christ, and in a View to the improving the Mind in a growing Meetness for a State of compleat Perfection. Name any thing which

^{* 1} Tim. i. 17. † Rev. xv. 4. # Deut. xxxii 47. § Pfal. cxix. 96.

has no Reference at all to this, and you name a worth-less Trisse, however it may be gilded to allure the Eyeshowever it may be sweetened to gratisy the Taste. Name a Thing which, instead of thus improving the Soul, has a Tendency to debase and pollute, to enslave and endanger it, and you name what is most unprofitable and mischievous, be the Wages of Iniquity ever so great; most foul and deformed, be it in the Eyes of Men ever so honourable, or in their Customs ever so fashionable. Thus I have endeavoured to shew you what we may suppose implied in this Expression of one Thing being needful. I am now,

111. To shew you with how much Propriety the Care of the Soul may be represented under this Character, as the one Thing needful, as a Matter of universal and most serious Concern, to which every thing else is to be considered as subservient, if at all worthy of our Care and Pursuit. Now let me appeal to the Sentiments of those who must be allowed most capable of judging, and to the evident Reason of the Case itself, as it must appear

to every unprejudiced Mind.

1. Let me argue "from the Sentiments of those who "must be allowed most capable of judging in such an "Affair," and we shall quickly see that the Care of the

Soul appears to them the one Thing needful.

Is the Judgment of the bleffed God according to Truth, how evidently and how folemnly is that Judgment declared? I will not fay merely in this or the other particular Passage of his Word, but in the whole Series of his Revelations to the Children of Men, and the whole Tenor of his Addresses to them. Is not this the Language of all, from the early Day's of Job and Moses to the Conclusion of the Ganon of Scripture. If * Wisdom be hid from the Fyes of all the Living, surely God understandeth the Way thereof, he knoweth the Place thereof; and if he does, 'iis plainly pointed out, for unto Man be still faith, bebold the Fear of the Lord that is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil, that is Understanding. By Moses he declared to the Ifraelites, that to do the Commandments of the Lo.d. would be their Wisdom and their Understanding in the Sight of the Nations, who should hear his Statutes, and and fay, furely this is a wife and an understanding People * When he had raised up one Man on the Throne of Ifrael, with the Character of the wifest that ever lived upon the Face of the Earth, he chose to make him eminently a Teacher of this great Truth. And now all that he spoke on the curious and less concerning Subjects of Natural Philosophy, is lost, though be spake of Trees from the Cedar to the Hillop, and of Beasts and of Fowls, and of creeping Things, and of Fishes +; that Saying is preserved in which he tellines, that the Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom I, and those Proverbs, in almost every Line of which they who neglect Gop and their own Souls are spoken of as Fools, as if that were the most proper ignification of the Word, while the Religious alone are honoured with the Title of Wise. this respect as attesting this Truth in the Name of God and in his own, a greater than Solomon is bere.

For if we enquire what it was that our Lord Jesus Christ judged to be the one Thing needful, the Words of the Text contain as full an Answer as can be imagined; and the Sense of them is repeated in a very lively and emphatical Manner, in that remarkable Passage wherein our Lord not only declares his own Judgment, but feems to appeal to the Consciences of all, as obliged by their own secret Conviction to subscribe to the Truth of it. What is a Man profited, if he gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul; or what shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul ? If it were once loft, what would he not be willing to give to redeem it? But it depends not on the Words of Christ alone. Let his Actions, his Sufferings, his Blood, his Death speak what a Value he fet on the Souls of Men. Is it to be imagined, that he would have relinquished Heaven, that he would have dwelt upon Earth, that he would have laboured by Night and by Day, and at last have expired on the Cross, for a Matter of light Importance? Or can we think that he, in whom dwell all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, and all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily & was mittaken in Judgment fo deliberately formed, and so solemnly declared?

* Deut. iv. 6. + 1 Kings iv. 33. ‡ Prov. i. 7. ix. 10. Math. xvi. 26. § Col. iii. 9.

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If after this there were room to mention human Judgment, and Tellimonies, how easy would it be to produce a Cloud of Witnesses in such a Cause, and to shew that the wisest and best of Men in all Ages of the World have agreed in this Point, that amidst all the Diversities of Opinion and Profession, which succeeding Generations have produced, this has been the unanimous Judgment, this the common and most solicitous Care of those, whose Characters are most truly valuable, to secure the Salvation of their own Souls, and to

promote the Salvation of others.

And let me beseech you seriously to reslect, what are the Characters of those who have taken the Liberty, most boldly and freely to declare their Judgment on the contrary Side? The Number of fuch is comparatively few; and when you compare what you have observed of their Temper and Conduct, I will not fay with what you read of holy Men of old, but with what you have yourselves seen in the faithful, active, and zealous Servants of Christ, in these latter Ages, with which you have conversed, do you on the whole find that the Rejecters and Deriders of the Gospel, are in other Respects so much more prudent and judicious, so much wiser for themselves, and for others that are influenced by them, as that you can be in Reason obliged to pay any great Deference to the Authority of a few such Names as these, in Opposition to those to which they are here opposed?

But you will say, and you will say it too truly, though but a few may venture in Words to declare for the Neglect of the Soul and its Eternal Interest, the greater Part of Mankind do it in their Actions. But are the greater Part of Mankind so wise, and so good, as implicitly to be followed in Matters of the highest Importance? And do not Multitudes of these declare themselves on the other Side, in their most serious Moments? When the Intoxications of Worldly Business and Pleasures are over, and some languishing Sickness forces Men to Solitude and Retirement; what have you generally observed to be the Effect of such a Circumstance? Have they not then declared themselves convinced of the Truth we are now labouring to establish? Nay, do we not sometimes see

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that a Distemper which seizes the Mind with Violence, yet does not utterly destroy its reasoning Faculties, fixes this Conviction on the Soul in a few Hours, nay sometimes in a few Moments? Have you never feen a gay, thoughtless Creature, surprized in the giddy Round of Pleasures and Amusements, and presently brought not only to Seriousness, but Terror and Trembling, by the near Views of Death? Have you never feen the Manof Business and Care interrupted, like the rich Fool in the Parable, in the midst of his Schemes for the present World? And have you not heard one and the other of them owning the Vanity of those Pleasures and Care, which but a few Days ago were every thing to them? Confessing that Religion was the one Thing needful, and recommending it to others with an Earnestness, as if they hoped thereby to atone for their own former Neglect? We that are Ministers frequently are Witnesses to such Things as these, and I believe few of our Hearen are entire Strangers to them.

And once more, what if to the Testimony of the Dying, we could add that of the Dead? What if God were to turn aside the Veil which separates between us and the invisible World, and to permithe most careless Sinner in the Assembly to converse for few Moments with the Inhabitants of it? If you were to apply yourself to a happy spirit, that trod the most thorny Road to Para dife, or paffed thro' the most fiery Trial, and to ask him " Was it worth your while to labour so much, and n " endure fo much for what you now possets?" Surely i the Bleffed in Heaven were capable of Indignation, would move them to hear that it should be made a Quel tion. And on the other Hand, if you could enquire of one to mented in that Flame below, though he might one be clothed in Purple and fine Linen and fare Sumptucy every Day*, if you could ask him, "Whether his for " mer Enjoyments were any Equivalent for his prefet " Sufferings and Despair ?" What Answer do you fur pose he would return? Perhaps an Answer of so muc Horror and Rage, as you would no be able fo much to endure. Or if the Malignity of his Nature show prevent him from returning any Answer at all, fure

^{*} Luke xvi. 19.

there would be a Language even in that Silence, a Language in the Darkness, and Flames, and Groans of that infernal Prison, which would speak to your very Soul what the Word of God is with equal Certainty, though less forcible Conviction, speaking to your Ear, that one Thing is needful. You see it is so in the Judgment of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, of the wisest and best of Men, of many who seemed to judge most differently of it, when they come to more deliberate and serious Thought, and not only of the Dying, but of the Dead too, of those who have experimentally known both Worlds, and most surely know what is to be preferred. But I will not rest the whole Argument here, I add therefore,

2. I appeal to the evident Reason of the Case itself, as it must appear to every unprejudiced Mind, that the

Care of the Soul is indeed the one Tring needful.

I still consider myself as speaking not to Atheists, or to Deits, but to those who not only believe the Existence and Providence of God, and a suture State of Happine's and Misery, but likewise who credit the Truth of the Caristian Revelation, as many undoubtedly do, who live in a tatal Neglect of God and their own Souls. Now on these Principles a little Resection may be sufficient to convince you, that tis needful to the present Repose of your own Mind; needful if ever you would secure eternal Happiness; if ever you would avoid eternal Misery, which would be aggravated, rather than alleviated, by all your present Enjoyments.

1. The Care of the Soul is the one Thing needful, because "without it you cannot secure the Peace of your own Mind, nor avoid the Upbraidings of your Con-

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That noble Faculty is, indeed, as you are often told, the Vicegerent of God in the Soul. 'Fis fensible of the Dignity and Worth of an immortal Spirit, and will sometimes cry out of the Violence that is offered to it, and cry so loud, as to compel the Sinner to hear, whether he will or no. Do you not sometimes find it yourselves? When you labour most to forget the Concerns of your Soul, do they not sometimes force themselves on your Remembrance? You are afraid of the Kessections of

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your own Mind, but with all your Artifice and all your Resolution, can you entirely avoid them ? Does not Conscience follow you to your Beds, even if denied the Opportunity of meeting you in your Closets, and tho' with an unwelcome Voice, there warn you, " that your Soul " is neglected, and will quickly be loft." Does it not follow you to your Shops and your Fields, when you are busiest there? Nay, I will add, does it not sometimes follow you to the Feast, to the Club, to the Dance, and perhaps, amidit all Resistance, to the Theatre too? Does it not sometimes mingle your sweetest Draughts with Wormwood, and your gayest Scenes with Horror? So that you are like a Tradesman, who, suspecting his Affairs to be in a bad Posture, lays by his Books and his rapers, yet fometimes they will come accidentally in his Way. He hardly dares to look Abroad for fear of meeting a Creditor or an Arrest; and if he labours to forget his Cares and his Dangers, in a Course of Luxury at Home, the Remembrance is sometimes awaken'd, and the Alarm increased, by those very Extravagancies in which he is attempting to lofe it. Such, no doubt, is the Case of some of your Minds, and 'tis a very painful State; and while Things are thus within, external Circumitances can no more make you happy, than a fine Dress could relieve you under a violent Fit of the Stone. Whereas if this great Affair was secured, you might de. light in Reflection, as much as you now dread it; and Conscience, of your bitterest Enemy, would become a delightful Friend, and the Testimony of it your greatest Rejoicing.

2. The Care of the Soul is the one Thing needful, because without it you cannot possibly secure your

" eternal Happiness."

A Crown of everlasting Glory is not surely such a Triste as to be thrown away on a careless Creature, that will not in good Earnest pursue it. God doth not ordinarily deal thus, even with the Bounties of his common Providence, which are comparatively of little Value. As to these, the Hand of the Diligent generally makes rich, and he would be thought distracted, rather than prudent, who should expect to get an Estate merely by wishing for it, or without some resolute and continued Application

plication to a proper Course of Action for that Purpose. Now, that we may not foolifhly dream of obtaining Heaven, in the midit of a Course of Indolence and Sloth, we are expressly told in the Word of Goo, that the Kingdom of Heaven Suffers Violence, and the Violent take it by Force ; and are therefore exported to frive with the greatest Intenseness, and Eagerness of Mind, as the Word properly fignifies, to enter in at the strait Gate, for this great and important Reason, because many shall another Day feek to enter in, and shall not be able +. Nay, when our Lord makes the most gracious Promises to the humble Petitioner, he does it in fuch a manner as to exclude the Hopes of those who are careless and indifferent. Ask, and it hall be given you; feek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you I. If therefore you do not ask, seek, and knock, the Door of Mercy will not be opened, and eternal Happiness will be lost.

And furely if I could fay no more as to the fatal Confequences of your Neglect, than this, that eternal Happiness will be lost, I should say, enough to impress every Mind that considers what Eternity means. To fall into a State of everlasting Forgetfulness might indeed appear a Refuge to a Mind filled with the Apprehention of tuture Mifery. But, Oh how dreadful a Refuge is it. Surely it is such a Refuge, as a vait Precipice, from which a Man falling would be dashed To-pieces in a Moment, might appear to a Person pursued by the Officers of Justice, that he might be brought out to a painful and lingering Execution. If an extravagant Youth would have Reason to look round with Anguish on some fair and ample paternal Inheritance, which he had fold or forfeited merely for the Riot of a few Days: How much more meloncholy would it be for a rational Mind to think that its eternal Happiness is lost for any earthly Confideration whatever. Tormenting Thought! had I attended to that one Thing which I have neglected, I might have been great and happy, beyond Expression, beyond Conception. Not merely for the little Span of ten thousand thousand Ages, but FOR EVER. So that the Moment would have come, when, if it had been asked concerning me, "How long has that glorious Spi-" rit

" rit been an Inhabitant of Heaven? How long has it been enjoying God, and itself, in that State of Per-" fection?"- The Answer would have been such. that a Line reaching even to the remotest Sar would not have been able to contain the Number of Ages, nor would Millions of Years have been sufficient to figure them down. This is Eternity, but I have loft it, and am now on the Verge of Being. This Lamp, which might have outlasted those of the Firmament, will prefently be extinguished, and I blotted out from amongst the Works of God, and cut off from all the Bounties of his Hand. Would not this be a very miserable Case, if this were all. And would it not be sufficient to prove this to be the better Part, which, as our Lord observes, can never be taken away. But God forbid that we should be so unfaithful to him, and to the Souls of Men, as to rest in such a Representation alone. I therefore add once more,

3. The Care of the Soul is the one Thing needful, because "without it you cannot avoid a State of eternal "Misery, which will be aggravated, rather than alle-

" viated by all your present Enjoyments."

Nothing can be more evident from the Word of the God of Truth. It there plainly appears to be a determined Case, which leaves no Room for a more favourable Conjecture or Hope, The Wicked shall be turned into Hell, even all the Nations that forget God's. They shall go away into everlafting Punishment+, into a State where they shall in vain feek Death, and Death shall flee from them. Oh! Sirs, 'tis a certain, but an awful Truth, that your Souls will be thinking and immortal Beings, even in Spite of themselves. They may indeed torment, but they can't destroy themselves. They can no more suspend their Power of Thought and Perception, than a Mirror its Property of reflecting Rays that fall on its Surface. Do you suspect the contrary? Make the Trial immediately. Command your Minds to cease from thinking but for one Quarter of an Hour; or for half that Time, and exclude every Idea and every Reflection. Can you succeed in that Attempt? Or rather, dges not Thought press in with a more sensible Violence 0

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on that Resistance; as an anxious Desire to Sleep, makes us so much the more wakeful. Thus will Thought sollow you beyond the Grave, thus will it as an unwelcome Guest, force itself upon you, when it can serve only to perplex and distress the Mind It will for ever upbraid you, that notwithstanding all the kind Expostulations of God and Man, notwithstanding all the keen Remonstrances of Conscience, and the Pleadings of the Blood of Christ, you have gone on in your Folly, till Heaven is lost, and Damnation incurred; and all for what? for a Shadow and a Dream.

Oh think not, Sinners, that the Remembrance of your past Pleasures, of your Success in your other Cares, whilst that of the one Thing needful was forgotten, think not that this will ease your Minds. It will rather torment them the more. Son, remember that thou in thy Life time received A thy good Things. Bitter Remembrance! Well might the Heathen Poets represent the unhappy Spirits in the Shades below, as eagerly catching at the Water of Forgetfulness, yet unable to reach it. Your present Comforts will only ferve, to give you a livelier Sense of your Mi. fery, as having tafted fuch Degrees of Enjoyment; and to inflame the reckoning, as you have mif-improved those Talents lodged in your Hands for better Purposes. Surely, if these Things were believed, and seriously confidered, the Sinner would have no more Heart to rejoice in his present Prosperity, than a Man would have to amuse himself with the Curiofities of a fine Garden, through which he was led to be broke upon the Rack.

But I will enlarge no farther on these Things. Would to God that the unaccountable Stupidity of Men's Minds, and their fatal Attachment to the Pleasures and Cares of the present Life, did not make it necessary to

infit on them fo frequently and fo copiously !

IV. I proceed to the Reflections which naturally arise from hence, and shall only mention two.

1. How much Reason have we to lament the Folly of

Mankind in neglecting the one Thing needful.

If Religion be indeed the truest Wisdom, then surely we have the justest Reason to say, with Solomon, that Folly and Madness is in Men's Hearts*. Is it the one Thing

needful? Look on the Conduct of the Generality of Mankind, and you would imagine they thought it the one Thing needless: The vainest Dream and the idlest Amusement of the Mind. God is admonishing them by Ordinances, and Providences, sometimes by such as are most aw'ul, to lay it to Heart; he speaks once, yea twice, yea a Multitude of Times, but Man regards not +. They profess perhaps to believe all that I have been saying, but act as if the contrary were felf-evident; they will risk these Souls and this Eternity, for a Thing of nought, for that for the Sake of which they would not risk so much as a Hand, or a Finger, or a Joint, no, nor perhaps a urely this is the Wonder of An-Toy that adorns it. sels, and perhaps of Devils too, unless the Observation of fo many Ages may have rendered it familiar to both. And can we, my Christian Brethren, behold fuch a Scene with Indifference? If some epidemical Madness had feized our Country, or the Places where we live, fo that as we went from one Place to another, we should every where meet with Lunaticks, and fee among the reft, some perhaps of the finest Genius and Improvements, and in the most eminent Stations in Life, amuf ing themselves with Straws and Bubbles, or wounding themselves and others; surely were we ever so secure from the Danger of Infection or Assault, the Sight would cut us to the Heart. Surely a good-natured man would hardly be able to go Abroad, or even be desirous to live, if it must be among so many sad Spectacles. Yet these poor Creatures might, notwithstanding this, be the Children of Goo, and the higher their Frenzy rose, the nearer might their compleat Happiness be. But alas, the greater Part of Mankind are seized with a worse kind of Madness, in which they are ruining their Souls: And can we behold it with Indifference! The Lord awaken our Compassion, our Prayer, and our Endeavours in Dependance on Divine Grace, that we may be instrumental in bringing them to their right Mind, and making them wife indeed, that is, wife to Salvation.

2. How necessary is it that we would seriously inquire how this one Thing Needful is regarded by us!

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Let me intreat you to remember your own Concern in it, and inquire—Have I thought seriously of it?—Have I seen the Importance of it?—Has it lain with a due and an abiding Weight on my Mind?—Has it brought me to Christ, that I might lay the Stress of these great eternal Interests on him?—And am I acting in the Main of my Life as one that has these Convictions?—Am I willing in fact to give up other Things, my Interests, my Pleasures, my Passions to this?—Am I conversing with God and with Man as one that believes these Things, as one that has deliberately chosen the better Part, and is determined to abide by that Choice?

Observe the Answer which Conscience returns to these Inquiries, and you will know your own Part in that more particular Application, with which I am to con-

clude my Discourfe.

1. Let me address those that are entirely unconcern-

ed about the one Thing needful.

Sirs, I have been stating the Case at large, and now I appeal to your Consciences, are these Things so, or are they not? God and your own Hearts best know for what the Care of your Soul is neglected; but be it what it will, the difference between one Grain of Sand, and another is not great, when it comes to be weighed against a Talent of Gold. Whatever it is, you had need to examine it carefully. You had need to view that Commodity on all Sides, of which you do in effect say, for this will I fell my Soul, for this will I give up Heaven and venture Hell, be Heaven and Hell whatever they may. In the Name of Gon, Sirs, is this the Part of a Man, of a rational Creature? To go on with your Eyes open towards a Pit of eternal Ruin, because there are a few gay Flowers in the Way. Or what if you shut your Eyes? will that prevent your Fall? It fignifies little to fay, I will not think of these Things, I will not consider them. God has said, in the last Days they shall consider it perfectly*. The Revels of a drunken Malefactor will not prevent, nor respite his Execution. Pardon my Plainness; if it were a Fable, or a Tale, I would endeayour to amuse you with words, but I cannot do it where your Souls are at Stake. . Jer. xxiii. 20.

2. I would apply to those who are convinced of the Importance of their Souls, yet are inclined to defer that Care of them a little longer, which in the general they

fee to be necessary.

I know, you that are young are under peculiar Temptations to do this; tho' 'tis strange that the Deain of fo many of your Companions should not be an answer to fome of the most specious and dangerous of those Temptations. Methinks if there were the least Degree of Uncertainty, the Importance is too weighty to put Matters to the Venture. But here the Uncertainty is great and apparent. You must furely know that there are critical Seafons of Life for managing the Concerns of it, which are of fuch a Nature, that, if once loft, they may never return: Here is a critical Season. Now is the accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation*. To-day if ye will bear his Voice, harden not your Heartst. This Language may not be spoken To-morrow. Talk not of a more convenient Season, none can be more convenient; and that to which you would probably refer it, is least of all fo. A dying Time. You would not chuse then to have any important Business in hand; and will you of Choice refer the greatest Business of all to that languishing, hurrying amazing Hour. If a Friend were then to come to you with the Balance of an intricate Account, or a View of a Title to an Estate, you would shake your fainting Head, and lift up your pale trembling Hand, and fay perhaps with a feeble Voice, Alas, is this a " Time for these Things?" And is it a Time for so much greater Things than these? I wish you knew, and would confider into what a Strait we that are Ministers are fometimes brought, when we are called to the dying Beds of those who have spent their Lives in the Neglect of the one Thing needful. On the one Hand we fear, lest if we pailiate Matters, and speak smooth Things, we shall betray and ruin their Souls; and on the other, that if we use a becoming Plainness and Seriousness, in warning them of their Danger, we shall quite overwhelm them, and haften the dying Moment which is advancing by such swift Steps. Oh let me intreat you, for our Sakes, and much more for your own, that you do not

drive us to such sad Extremities: But that if you are convinced, as I hope some of you may now be, that the Care of the Soul is that needful Thing we have represented, let the Conviction Work, let it drive you immediately to the Throne of Grace, that from thence you may derive that Wisdom and Strength which may direct you in all the Intricacies which entangle you, and animate you in the midst of Difficulty and Discouragement.

3. I would in the last Place address myself to those happy Souls, who have in good Earnest attended to the

one Thing needful.

I hope when you fee how commonly it is neglected, neglected indeed by many, whose natural Capacities, Improvements, and Circumstances in Life, appear 10, you fuperior to your own, you will humbly acknowledge, that it was diftinguishing Grace that brought you into this happy State, and formed you to this most necessary Care. Bless the Lord therefore who hath given you that Counsel, in Virtue of which you can say that He is your Portion .- Rejoice in the Thought that the great Concern is secured; as 'tis natural for us to do, when fome important Affair is dispatched which has long lain before us, and which we have been inclined to put off from one Day to another, but have at length strenuously and fuccessfully attended. - Remember still to continue acting on these great Principles which at first determined your Choice; and feriously consider, that those who defire their Life may at last be given them for a Prey, must continue on their Guard, in all Stages of their Journey thro' a Wilderness, where daily dangers are still furrounding them. Having secured the great Concern, make yourselves easy as to others of smaller Importance. You have chosen the Kingdom of God and his Righteoufness, other Things therefore shall be added unto you; and if any which you defire should not be added, comfort yourselves with this Thought, that you have the good Part which can never be taken away. And, not to enlarge on these obvious Hints, which must so often occur, be very folicitous that others may be brought to a Care about the one Thing needful. If it be needful for you, 'tis to for your Children, your Friends, your Servants. Let them therefore see your Concern in this Re2. I would apply to those who are convinced of the Importance of their Souls, yet are inclined to defer that Care of them a little longer, which in the general they

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pect for them, as well as for yourselves. Let Parents, specially, attend to this Exhortation, whose Care for their Offspring often exceeds in other Respects, and fails in this. Remember that your Children may never live to enjoy the Effects of your Labour and Concern, to get them Estates and Portions. The Charges of their Eunerals may perhaps be all their Share of what you are so anxiously careful to lay up for them. And Oh! think what a Sword would pierce thro your very Heart, if you should stand by the Corpse of a beloved Child with this Reslection, "This poor Creature has done with Life" before it learnt its great Business in it, and is gone to Eternity, which I have seldom been warning it to prepare for, and which perhaps it learnt of me to forget."

On the whole, may this grand Care be awakened in those by whom it has been hitherto neglected; may it be revived in each of our Minds. And that you may be encouraged to pursue it with greater Chearfulness, let me conclude with this comfortable Thought, that in Proportion to the Necessity of the Case, is the Provision which Divine Grace has made for our Assistance. If you are disposed to set down at Christ's Feet, he will teach you by his Word and pirit. If you commit this precious Jewel, which is your eternal All, into his Hand, he will preserve it unto that Day, and will then produce it richly adorned, and gloriously improved to his own

Honour, and to your everlasting Joy. Amen.



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" I am, &c. &c.

" GILBERT WEST."

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"in a Course of faithful and universal Obedience.

"It is a Fact, that this Book has been, and still is,
the grand Instrument of reforming a degenerate
World, and in proportion to the Degree in which
this Evangelical Scheme is received and relished, it
is evident that the Interest of true Virtue and Holiness
flourishes, and the Mind is formed to manly Devotion, disfusive Benevolence, and true Fortitude.
Would to God, therefore, that forgetting all Party-

"tion, diffusive Benevolence, and true Fortitude.
"Would to God, therefore, that forgetting all Party"Names, and unscriptural Phrases and Forms, which
"have divided the Christian World, we might all agree
to sit down together, as humble loving Disciples, at
the Feet of our common Master, to hear his Word,
imbibe his Spirit, and transcribe his Life in our own."

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